

THE RELATIONSHIPS OF PLACE:  
A STUDY OF CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN STÓ:LŦ UNDERSTANDINGS OF I:YEM

A Thesis Submitted to the College of  
Graduate Studies and Research  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts  
in the Department of History  
University of Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon

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## **Abstract**

Building out of recent scholarship that examines the way colonialism has altered Aboriginal people's relationships with the land, this thesis employs the theories of historical anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, historical philosopher R.G. Collingwood, and historical consciousness with ethnohistorical methods to explore the ways Native people have worked to protect and regain their connections with certain places. In particular, it examines change and continuity in the ways that the Stó:lō Coast Salish in South Western British Columbia have understood and continue to understand a place called I:yem, located four kilometres north of Yale in the Fraser Canyon. Following a historiographical chapter, two case studies are used to access past and present Stó:lō understandings of I:yem. The first case study examines the 1938 erection of a memorial there (which incorporated and blended aspects of Roman Catholicism with an articulation of a distinct Stó:lō identity and assertion of rights) to see how I:yem was understood at the time. The creation of the I:yem Memorial illuminates those aspects of Stó:lō relationships with I:yem that were considered non-negotiable in the face of rapid change and conflict, namely the continued importance of fishing and ancestors. The second case study, based on oral interviews that I conducted during the joint University of Victoria/University of Saskatchewan Stó:lō Ethnohistory Fieldschool in June 2007, focuses on the current significance of I:yem and its memorial. Today the Stó:lō place a greater emphasis on the importance of re-establishing personal connections with the Fraser Canyon in general, rather than in identifying those specific aspects of the relationships that are collectively and communally non-negotiable and in need of being preserved. Over the past seventy years the Aboriginal people of the Fraser Canyon and Valley have employed innovative means to regain and preserve attachments to their places. This thesis explores these processes, fundamentally demonstrating the importance Stó:lō people attribute to maintaining relationships with place in the face of change

## **Acknowledgments**

First and foremost I must thank my supervisor Professor Keith Thor Carlson for his generosity, guidance, and patience, throughout this process. I am grateful to Professor Carlson for introducing me to fieldwork and the Stó:lō community, for drawing my attention to the I:yem memorial and this topic, and for discussing and sharing ideas with me. It has been a privilege to work with him and attempt to build on his impressive scholarly contribution.

This thesis benefited from the encouragement and advice of my committee members Professors Valerie Korinek and Michael Cottrell. Professor Korinek reminded me to question who the intended audience of the memorial was. Professor Cottrell drew my attention to the role of language in shaping understandings of place and reminded me to explore the role of outsiders in shaping identities. Thanks to my external examiner, Professor Kristina Fagan for her careful reading of my thesis and thoughtful questions about I:yem itself that I have attempted to incorporate into a preface.

I appreciate the support that I have received from faculty and staff in the Department of History at the U of S. Further thanks are owed to Professors Jim Miller and Lisa Smith, as well as to Linda Dietz. I was fortunate to receive comments from Professor John Sutton Lutz (University of Victoria) for my fieldschool paper that ultimately benefited my thesis. I am grateful to Professor Lutz for sharing his insights into finding a balance between being critical and respectful.

My sincere thanks are offered to Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, Tia Halstead, David Schaepe, and Alice Marwood at the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre at Stó:lō Nation for all of their assistance and kindness during fieldschool and again during my research trip. I am indebted to Dave for sharing some of his archaeological knowledge with me, to Tia for helping



me find sources in the Stó:lō Nation Archives, and to Alice for her help with genealogical information. I am especially grateful to Sonny McHalsie, for helping to shape my thesis topic, and for taking time from his busy schedule to share his knowledge of I:yem.

This thesis would not have been possible without the generous support of community members who welcomed me to the Fraser Canyon and Valley and shared their understandings of I:yem with me. I am indebted to the Garner family, Mrs. Gutierrez, Leona Kelly, Archie Charles, Mrs. Pete, Steven Point, Mrs. Dixon, Mrs. Johnny, Mrs. Angus, Robert Emery, and Jack Lawrence.

I cannot thank Mabel and Jack Nichols enough for their encouragement and support. I am indebted to Mabel for my first trip to B.C., for finding the article on the dedication of the I:yem Memorial in the 1938 Chilliwack Progress, for introducing me to Ms. Seles at the Archdiocese of Vancouver Archives, for inquiring into the history of the I:yem Memorial, and for taking photographs of the monument for my thesis. It has been an absolute privilege to get to know you both over the past two years.

The following institutions provided helpful information and records: Library and Archives Canada, Archdiocese of Vancouver, Archives and Documentation Services Canadian Museum of Civilization, Oblates' Archives Deschatelets, B.C. Archives, Stó:lō Nation Archives, and the Chilliwack Law Court. I would like to thank the following individuals for helping me to find and obtain sources: Katya MacDonald, Gloria MacKenzie, Gail Mullock, Anthea Seles, David Smith, and Benoit Thériault.

I have presented on aspects of this thesis at the following conferences: Western Canadian Studies Conference (2008), Buffalo Province History Conference (2008), Cultures in Contact Graduate History Symposium at the U of T (2008), and the U of S Department of History

Graduate Student Colloquium (2007). I am grateful for all the feedback that I received at these events, and especially for written comments from Professor Kenneth Mills.

I am indebted to Kevin Gambell, Katya MacDonald, and Heather Stanley for taking time to read drafts of my chapters and for their thoughtful comments and suggestions. Thanks are especially owed to Marlene Fehr who learned more about I:yem than she likely wanted to, first as I talked out my ideas and later as she read and commented on various drafts. While this thesis has benefited from the encouragement, feedback and assistance of others any errors are my own.

This research was supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Canada Graduate Scholarship at the Masters Level, a University of Saskatchewan Master's Graduate Scholarship, and a University of Saskatchewan Student Travel Award. Professor Carlson provided me with opportunities to work as a research assistant and allowed me to do some of my own research while conducting research for him in Ottawa and the Fraser Valley.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with and getting to know many of my fellow history graduate students. I would especially like to recognize the generosity of my office mates in McLean Hall 33 (official and honorary), and my fieldschool compatriots in sharing their company, humour, advice, and ideas. Finally I am truly grateful to my family for their patience and encouragement throughout this process.

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## Preface

In some ways this is not the thesis I set out to write when I began the MA programme in history at the University of Saskatchewan two years ago. Responding to Canadian historical geographer Cole Harris' call for a study focusing on Native notions of colonized space, I planned to research and write about Aboriginal understandings of place in British Columbia. I did not anticipate that politics and fishing would be such a significant part of my discussion. Yet many of the themes and ideas that I have tried to address in this thesis—continuity and change, exploring dynamics within and between communities while creating a space for individual agency, and attempting to be both critical and respectful—have interested me for a while now.

Several of the themes explored in this thesis emerged as I conducted my actual research, and this project was significantly shaped by three trips that I have taken to the Fraser Valley. While my broad proposal was to explore the relationship between Native understandings of place and colonization in B.C., when I started, I had never been to British Columbia, or heard of a place called I:yem. While I had done some research with Métis communities in Northwest Saskatchewan, I had yet to work with the Stó:lō.

My first trip to Stó:lō territory was in November 2006. I was invited by Mabel Nichols (a Stó:lō woman whose self-published family history *Ma's Father-in-Law: The Judge* I had edited) to attend the launch of the second edition of her uncle's memoirs *Call Me Hank* and a traditional burning. It was during this trip that my advisor, Professor Keith Thor Carlson, introduced me to I:yem and suggested a study of the memorial there (erected by the Stó:lō in 1938) as a way to access Stó:lō understandings of place for my thesis. He explained that the memorial represented the first time that the term "Stó:lō" was publicly used in writing by the people of the region to describe themselves. Furthermore, he noted that a history of the I:yem Memorial would be of

interest to the Stó:lō and in particular Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, Director of the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre at Stó:lō Nation whose great-grandfather, Dennis S. Peters, had been involved in creating the memorial almost seventy years earlier. However, my first impression of this place was that it was lonely and isolated. The monument, that was missing its explanatory plaque, was in a cemetery between a mountain, an abandoned highway, and railway track on the one side, and on the other the roaring waters of the Fraser River as it passed through the canyon below. Indeed, I was doubtful that I would be able to find the site again, and uncertain as to how I could incorporate it into my study of place.

During this first trip I heard Stó:lō histories in the places they had occurred. Most importantly, I met Sonny McHalsie who shared some of his extensive knowledge of I:yem and the history of its memorial with me, and patiently listened to my preliminary ideas for my thesis research. As a result of this experience, I returned to Saskatoon planning to analyse Native perspectives and understandings of geographical space through its metaphorical relationship with the human body, exploring how these conceptions may have been affected by colonization by looking at specific events around the I:yem Memorial.

I planned to conduct interviews for my thesis and meet some more community members during a second trip to the Fraser Valley in June 2007 when I participated in the University of Saskatchewan-University of Victoria Stó:lō Ethnohistory Fieldschool. My fieldschool project was directly relevant to my thesis research, as I was to conduct a historical study of the I:yem Memorial. To this end, I conducted original semi-structured interviews with community members Tillie Gutierrez, Rita Pete, Sonny McHalsie, Steven Point, and Archie Charles, and I informally met with several others, spending a considerable amount of time with Lena Johnnie

and her daughter Marion Dixon, as well as Mabel Nichols, who had taken a personal interest in my project.

These interviews and meetings emphasized the intimate nature of conducting community research. I do not think the importance of these relationships can be stressed enough, nor the social and personal obligations that come with them. These are not sources—they are people. I was obligated to be careful in my use of the information that they shared with me and aware of potential consequences that my analysis might have. This responsibility was heightened by current tensions between the Stó:lō and the Yale First Nation over territory. Nonetheless, I also had a scholarly obligation to be critical of my sources. Throughout this process I have struggled with finding a balance between being respectful and critical, and have attempted to address this issue in my thesis by being open about my thought process and aware of some of my own biases.

The information that the above-mentioned community members shared with me fundamentally altered the focus of my research project. Whereas I had assumed that there would be a significant amount of oral history about the events at I:yem, I soon discovered that little was known about the memorial there. As a result, it was necessary for this study to take a broader focus. Questions of I:yem and the canyon itself, leadership, community identities, memory, fishing and the history of the memorial needed to be explored before contemplating a project like I had originally planned. In response, my thesis expanded from my fieldschool assignment to a micro-historical study of Stó:lō relationships with I:yem. I began archival research to answer some of my questions about I:yem, the memorial, and its creators. Since then my thesis, and own understanding of I:yem, continued to grow and change.

This revised approach drew upon the theories of anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, historian R. G. Collingwood, and the idea of historical consciousness, as I wanted to access

Aboriginal understandings of I:yem. I also incorporated other theorists to deal with specific issues I was facing. Although terms like historical consciousness, event/structure dialectic, hybridity, post-modernism and post-colonialism, and the concepts behind them, inform my discussion, I chose to apply terms such as change, continuity, relationships and understandings. This terminology provided a way to incorporate and combine what I felt were the general ideas influencing my work, but more importantly, I wanted to write a thesis that engages with Aboriginal understandings of place that are recognizable to those that I have interviewed, and to whom those places belong.

The idea of relationships is especially central to this project. Clearly, it deals with relationships between people and places, but it also looks at relationships between Natives and Newcomers, relationships within and between Aboriginal groups themselves, and those between the past, present, and future. Most importantly, the work itself was dependent on my own relationships with informants and other community members. It was these relationships that challenged my own understandings and shaped my interpretation of other sources.

My third and final trip to the Fraser Canyon and Valley was in the spring of 2008, when I hoped to conduct interviews with members of the Yale First Nation. As I had not been able to meet with anyone representing that community during the fieldschool, it was important that I do so now. This was especially necessary due to the dispute between the Yale and the Stó:lō over territory, and because Yale is the nearest Aboriginal community to I:yem. I attempted to meet with some members of the Yale First Nation, and had a very positive informal conversation with some people that emphasized their different understandings of I:yem as well as certain commonalities with information that I had gained from my Stó:lō informants. This raised questions as to how I could include the perspectives of the Stó:lō and the Yale while remaining



critical and respectful to both groups. Rather than choosing one interpretation, I attempted to historicize both claims to explore why they were different. I also attempted to turn the critical gaze on myself, to look at my own biases and what I was taking for granted in my analysis.

Although there was some initial interest from members of the Yale First Nation, I was unable to conduct formal interviews with anyone belonging to that community. In response to my letter of introduction to Chief Robert Hope of Yale, I was told that the First Nation was presently very involved in treaty negotiations and would not be able to consider my request until their negotiations were completed—a timeframe that would not facilitate a timely completion of this project. Still, it was essential that my thesis include the perspective of the Yale First Nation. I attempted to do this using alternative sources such as earlier interviews with Yale elder Lawrence Hope, newspaper articles, court statements and affidavits, and the Yale Agreement In Principal from their ongoing treaty negotiations. This use of a variety of sources resulted in a fuller discussion, as I was able to look for consistency and track change over time. For balance, I also looked at newspaper articles, affidavits from legal battles fought with the Stó:lō, and earlier interviews involving those Stó:lō people who I personally interviewed.

The following meditation on relationships between the Aboriginal people of the Fraser Canyon and Valley and I:yem is not the thesis I anticipated writing, but one that needed to be written. As I learned about I:yem and those with connections to it, both in the past and the present, my own understandings of this seemingly forgotten place changed. I:yem is a place of many layers of meaning and identities. I now imagine I:yem as a transformer site, an ancient village, a busy fishing spot, the location where a monument created by the Stó:lō was publicly blessed by an Archbishop, and a place that is politically contested today. It is a place of continuity and change that some people remember. Writing this thesis has been a process, and

over time my ideas changed and developed, often with the help of others. My initial proposal transformed to a fieldschool project which itself evolved into something quite different, as I responded to specific scholarly questions and incorporated perspectives beyond those of Stó:lō political groups. I intended to explore Aboriginal understandings of place, and see this micro-history, which explores some aspects of Stó:lō and Yale relationships with I:yem, as a beginning.



**The author at I:yem, November 2006 (photo courtesy of Keith Thor Carlson)**

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

When [Xá:ls] travelled through we accepted him because he was nice to us. Then pretty soon Christopher Columbus, pretty soon Simon Fraser, [Governor James] Douglas, you name them; all big shots that came through after. Start taking things away from them. Pretty soon the railroad was going in, highway, we got nothing, here's what we have left right on the edge of the road, river there. And that's where the railway and highway is going through. We still have our landmarks there; those few graveyards left here and there along the edge of the river. And why do they have to say we could move this and we're going to build another track? No, not through, we do that we're lost. Because that's our survival right there.

- Stó:lō elder Matilda Gutierrez objecting to the proposed Canadian National Railway (CNR) Twin Tracking Project, 1988<sup>1</sup>

Stó:lō elder Matilda Gutierrez highlights the continuous changes that have occurred in the Fraser Canyon, in South Western British Columbia (B.C.), as well as the importance of particular places and landmarks there to the identity of the Stó:lō Coast Salish people. Similarly, Canadian historical geographer, Cole Harris, in his description of the process of colonization in the canyon, and tentative exploration of Native resistance to it, explains, “the Fraser Canyon bore the concentrated brunt of much of what the nineteenth century threw at B.C.”<sup>2</sup> Throughout such significant changes to places in the canyon, the Stó:lō have responded and adapted. This thesis explores some of the ways that the Stó:lō have understood the changes to their places, while recognizing that these interpretations are also shaped by other relationships: those between and

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<sup>1</sup> Matilda Gutierrez, Interview with Sonny McHalsie, Randel Paul, and Richard Daly, Chawathil, 10 September 1988, transcript, Stó:lō Nation Archives [SNA] Oral History Collection, 88-37, p. 27. The first square brackets are not my own, but were included in the transcript. It is interesting that the singular term Xá:ls is used rather than the plural Xexá:ls to refer to the transformers who traveled through the Stó:lō world making things permanent. Mrs. Gutierrez sometimes refers to Xá:ls as “the little Christ,” “a change that hints at the introduction of Christian influence.” See Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, David M. Schaepe, and Keith Thor Carlson, “Making the World Right Through Transformations,” in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, ed. Keith Thor Carlson, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2001), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), p. 105.

within Aboriginal groups themselves; the past, the present, and the future; as well as those between people of different genders, class or social status, families, cultures, and biographical experiences.

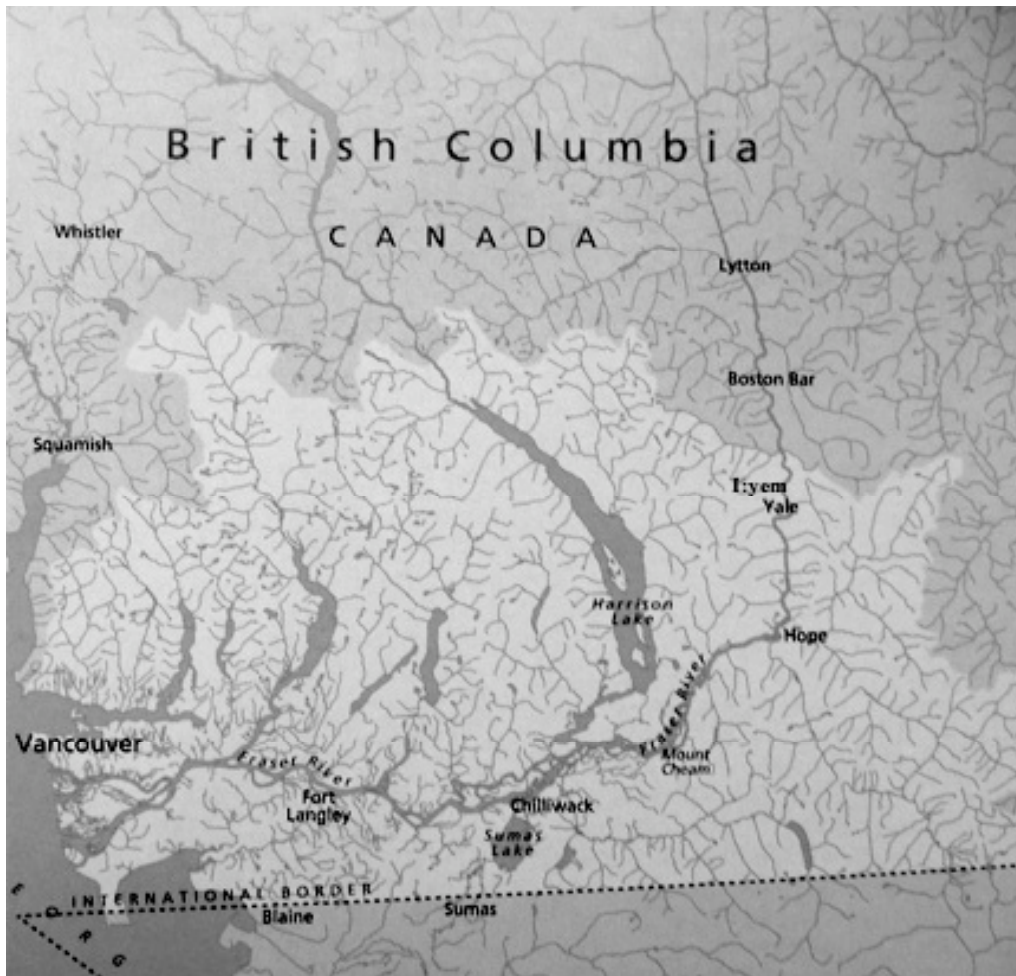
The Fraser Canyon is a place of resistance and change, and as such is ideal for a scholarly exploration of Stó:lō Coast Salish people's understandings of place.<sup>3</sup> This study focuses on a place of particular economic and political significance in the canyon called I:yem, meaning "strong" or "lucky place,"<sup>4</sup> located four kilometres north of Yale, B.C. in an area referred to as the "five mile canyon fishery." The use of a micro-historical approach to this topic is to encourage a discussion of the specificities of place and individual agency while highlighting broader cultural themes and illuminating historical context.<sup>5</sup> This balance between the specific and the general allows for a detailed examination while enabling the drawing of broader conclusions. This historiographical chapter provides an overview of some of the specific changes that have occurred at I:yem over time and highlights the methodological issues of this project.

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<sup>3</sup>The use of the term place is deliberate, building on scholarship on "place making" such as Keith Basso's *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. The term "place" is dependent on the existence of a relationship between people and the landscape, and in this way is different from the idea of "space." Concepts of place are also typically linked with ideas of displacement, and are important in identity formation, but are often only noted when disrupted. "Colonial interventions radically disrupt the representation of place by separating 'space' from 'place.'" Furthermore, place is local, and where social relationships are located. See "Place," *Post Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 177-179; Keith Basso *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996); Keith Thor Carlson, "The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: A Study of History and Aboriginal Identity," (PhD Dissertation, UBC, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> See Wilson Duff, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley British Columbia*, Anthropology in British Columbia Memoir No. 1, (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1952), p. 30; Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, "Halq'emélem Place Names in Stó:lō Territory," in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 142.

<sup>5</sup> For literature on micro-history, and its relationships with macro-history see, Matti Peltonen, "Clues, Margins and Monads: The Micro-Macro Link in Historical Research," *History and Theory* 40 (2001): pp. 347-359; Marshall Sahlins, "Structural Work: How Microhistories Become Macrohistories and Vice Versa," *Anthropological Theory* 5 (2005): pp. 5-30.



**Figure 1.1 Map of Fraser Canyon and I:yem**

As ethnohistorian Keith Thor Carlson has noted, the term Stó:lō, meaning either “river” or “people of the river,” “sits better with some contemporary Aboriginal political and cultural leaders than others,”<sup>6</sup> raising important questions about the usage of the term in this thesis. Most scholars agree that Stó:lō refers to a group of Indigenous people of the Lower Fraser watershed in South Western British Columbia, living in more than two dozen Bands or First Nations. They

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<sup>6</sup> The most notable dispute over the term Stó:lō is between the Yale First Nation on the one side and the Stó:lō Nation and Tribal Council on the other over territory and who should be considered Stó:lō. See Keith Thor Carlson, “Introduction,” in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 2.

share a similar culture, the Halq'emélem language, and social affiliations, while issues of political unity remain contested. In these political debates, some groups do not consider themselves to be Stó:lō, especially those whose territory is along the fringes of what is claimed as Stó:lō territory.<sup>7</sup> Most notably are the Chief and Council of the Yale First Nation, whose territory is closest to the Fraser Canyon, who have suggested that anthropologist Wilson Duff coined the term Stó:lō in the 1950s.<sup>8</sup> However, Wilson Duff was careful to emphasize that the Stó:lō were “by no means homogenous either in culture or language,” and noted the existence of different tribes amongst them. The Tait were identified as the people of the uppermost region of Stó:lō territory, an area extending from Five Mile Creek above Yale down river thirty-five miles. Duff grouped the Tait with the Pilalt and Chilliwack people, with whom they shared a similar dialect of Halq'emélem, under the term Upper Stó:lō.<sup>9</sup> There is also evidence of the term Stó:lō being used as early as the 1870s,<sup>10</sup> and a clear distinction in the ethnographic literature between the Stó:lō and their upriver neighbours, the Nlaka'pamux, who speak a different language. The boundary between the two groups, “marked by a large boulder in the river six miles above Yale” was still strictly observed in 1945 when anthropologist Marion Smith and her students conducted interviews in the area.<sup>11</sup> These issues of terminology are further complicated by the use of the term in the names of contemporary political organizations the Stó:lō Nation and the Stó:lō Tribal Council. These organizations were formed in the 1970s and 1980s to negotiate land claims with

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Carlson refers to the Tsawwassen, Musqueam, and Yale First Nations as examples of this.

<sup>8</sup> Yale First Nation Paid Advertisement, *Chilliwack Progress*, 3 July 1999.

<sup>9</sup> Duff, *The Upper Stalo*, p. 12, 19; See also Franz Boas, “The Indian Tribes of the Lower Fraser River,” (London, 1894), p. H1.

<sup>10</sup> Carlson, “The Power of Place, the Problem of Time,” pp. 6, 289.

<sup>11</sup> “Villages,” Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (summer 1945), Royal Anthropological Institute (London Great Britain), 268:3:2 (5) and 268:3:2 (10), (Copies at B.C. Archives, Victoria B.C.), MS-2794.

the government.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, in this thesis the term Stó:lō will be used in its most general sense to refer to cultural similarity and shared history. Specific political entities will be identified separately. The terms used will also be contingent on the context of discussion and how people choose to identify themselves, and will be made clear when appropriate.

The territory of the Stó:lō Coast Salish people, which is known as S'olh Téméxw, meaning “our world,” has been described as being “as much a mythological universe as a biological world,” where the Stó:lō simultaneously walk “through both spiritual and physical realms.”<sup>13</sup> The Fraser Canyon has always been a place of transformation and change. It has also been a place where, originating with the arrival of Xexá:ls, or the transformers at or near the beginning of time, attempts have been made to make things permanent or literally right. Communities were linked to particular ancestors who, through the acts of the transformers, were literally turned into aspects or features of the landscape.<sup>14</sup> For example, about three quarters of a mile above the village of I:yem there is a large rock, popularly referred to since the 1858 gold rush as Steamboat Island, that the Stó:lō maintain was a canoe turned to stone by the transformers.<sup>15</sup> A site known as Qwél:es, meaning whale, is also just above I:yem, and is said to be a whale turned to stone by Xexá:ls.<sup>16</sup> Elder Robert (Bob) Joe noted in the 1950s that when

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<sup>12</sup>David M. Schaepe, “Stó:lō Identity and the Cultural Landscape of S'olh Téméxw,” in *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, ed. Bruce Granville Miller (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 237.

<sup>13</sup>McHalsie, et. al., “Making the World Right Through Transformations,” p. 6.

<sup>14</sup>Schaepe, “Stó:lō Identity and the Cultural Landscape of S'olh Téméxw,” p. 239; Boas also noted that each community was linked to a mythical ancestor. Boas, “The Indian Tribes of the Lower Fraser River,” p. H1.

<sup>15</sup>Wilson Duff, Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Washington, 1952, p. 49, as quoted in Cinnamon A. Pandur, “Transformer sites and S\_wo\_wiyam: An examination of the Published and Unpublished Works of Wilson Duff,” (University of Saskatchewan/University of Victoria Stó:lō Ethnohistory Fieldschool, 2005), SNA, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

the water is low, the head of the whale becomes visible.<sup>17</sup> I:yem, situated in this landscape of transformation, has consistently been a place of change, but also of continuity where one's ancestors are actually fixed into particular places.

The villages of the Fraser Canyon were densely populated at one point. In 1839, a Hudson Bay Company census estimated that just over one third of the total Aboriginal population of the Lower Fraser River was living in settlements along an approximately seven kilometre stretch between Lady Franklin Rock and Sailor Bar Rapids.<sup>18</sup> This high population was likely directly related to the valuable canyon fishing spots and places for wind drying salmon.<sup>19</sup> The names of these fishing grounds typically came from the village connected to the fishing area.<sup>20</sup> Carlson has noted that these spots were some of the most prestigious of hereditary property, and would have been used by large networks of extended families; they were essential to survival, facilitated prosperity, and were therefore integral to West Coast culture. He has argued that it was this salmon fishery that contributed to a "general social cohesion felt by all Indigenous people whose lives revolved around the lower Fraser River and its resources."<sup>21</sup> According to respected elders Matilda Gutierrez and the late Agnes Kelly, the most popular of

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<sup>17</sup>Robert Joe, Wilson Duff, Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook #2, 11 July 1950, Royal British Columbia Museum, (copies at SNA); McHalsie et. al., "Making the World Right Through Transformations," p. 7. I:yem was also the site of Women's Pubic Area Rock, implying a gendered element to this place. See McHalsie, "Halq'emélem Place Names in Stó:lō Territory," p. 135.

<sup>18</sup>Keith Thor Carlson, "The Numbers Game: Interpreting Historical Stó:lō Demographics," in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 78.

<sup>19</sup>Carlson, "The Power of Place, the Problem of Time," p. 61. Wilson Duff also noted that prior to white contact the Tait population was heavily concentrated in the canyon above Yale (even in the winter), although there still would have been an influx of people during the summer fishing season. See Duff, *The Upper Stalo*, p. 40.

<sup>20</sup>Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, "We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us," in *Be of Good Mind*, p. 89.

<sup>21</sup>Carlson, "The Power of Place, the Problem of Time," p. 183; Keith Thor Carlson, "Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon," in *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada's Native Pasts*, ed. Ted Binnema and Susan Neylan, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), pp.147-148.



these sites was I:yem, as it was such a lucky place to fish for salmon.<sup>22</sup> A permanent village and burial ground,<sup>23</sup> I:yem was an especially good site for catching the March spring salmon<sup>24</sup> and the summer runs of sockeye.

In addition to I:yem, there were five other main canyon villages and cemeteries located at Yale or Xwoxwelá:lph, Xelhálh, Q'aleliktel, Aseláw, and Lexwts'okwám.<sup>25</sup> Oral history and recent work by archaeologist David Schaepe shows important links between and cooperation amongst the peoples of the canyon villages above Yale. Schaepe notes the existence of defensive structures throughout the canyon such as rock wall fortifications at its entrance by Xelhálh to Lexwts'okwám at the end of Stó:lō territory, and hypothesizes this defensive system (which would have regulated river passage throughout the canyon) was a multi-village effort.<sup>26</sup>

There is other evidence of inter-village cooperation. Although it is usually believed that in pre-contact Coast Salish society there was no political authority beyond the level of the village,<sup>27</sup> Wayne Suttles demonstrates that amongst the Coast Salish the village was only one “aspect of the individual and one component unity in the larger whole.” He explains that villages were not “self contained social units,” as the individual and family ties between villages were as strong as those within. These complex webs of kinship networks were directly linked to ceremonial and economic rights. Therefore, in addition to one’s identity from their own village,

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<sup>22</sup>McHalsie, “We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us,” in *Be of Good Mind*, p. 90; Brent Galloway and Coqualeetza Elders, Stó:lō Geographical Place Names File, Field Trip Two, August 1977, SNA.

<sup>23</sup>Robert Joe, Wilson Duff Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook #2, 11 July 1950.

<sup>24</sup>Galloway, p. 38.

<sup>25</sup>McHalsie, “We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us,” p. 92.

<sup>26</sup>David Schaepe, “Rock Wall Fortifications: Reconstructing a Fraser Canyon Defensive Network,” in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p.52.

<sup>27</sup> See Wayne Suttles, “They Recognize No Superior Chief: The Strait of Juan de Fuca in the 1790’s,” in Jose Luis Peset, ed., *Culturas de la Costa Noroeste de America*, (Madrid: Turner, 1989).

status was defined and maintained by inter-village marriage and potlatch relations.<sup>28</sup> More recent scholarship by anthropologist Bruce Miller, lawyer and historian Alexandra Harmon, and Carlson has continued to emphasize the significance of these family ties and their connections to the identities, social organizations, and disputes of the Coast Salish.<sup>29</sup>

The establishment of Fort Yale in 1848 drew large numbers of people from the Fraser Canyon, resulting in the increased abandonment of canyon villages in the winter;<sup>30</sup> however, the importance of the canyon continued to be reflected in the influence of the Stó:lō leaders at Yale. The leadership and political structure of “pre-contact” Coast Salish groups has been debated amongst Wayne Suttles, Bruce Miller, Daniel Boxberger, Kenneth Tollefson, Jay Miller, and David Schaepe.<sup>31</sup> It seems that the canyon siyá:ms, Halq’emélem for “leaders” or “respected people,”<sup>32</sup> were always important, although they were clearly impacted by the colonial changes to their place. In 1950, Stó:lō elders Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto told Wilson Duff that “it was the

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<sup>28</sup> Wayne Suttles, “The Persistence of Intervillage Ties,” in *Coast Salish Essays*, ed. Wayne Suttles (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), pp. 219-220, 229.

<sup>29</sup> See Carlson, “The Power of Place, the Problem of Time”; Keith Thor Carlson, “Toward an Indigenous Historiography: Events, Migrations, and the Formation of Post-Contact Coast Salish Collective Identities,” in *Be of Good Mind*, p. 19; Alexandra Harmon “Coast Salish History,” in *Be of Good Mind*; Bruce Miller, *The Problem of Justice: Tradition and Law in the Coast Salish World* (Lincoln Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

<sup>30</sup> Duff, *The Upper Stalo*, p.141; Carlson, “The Power of Place, the Problem of Time,” p. 185.

<sup>31</sup> See Kenneth D. Tollefson, “The Snoqualmie: A Puget Sound Chiefdom,” *Ethnology* 26, 2 (April 1987); Wayne Suttles, “They Recognize No Superior Chief: The Strait of Juan de Fuca in the 1790’s”; Kenneth D. Tollefson, “Political Organization of the Duwamish,” *Ethnology*, 28 (April 1989); Bruce G. Miller and Daniel L. Boxberger, “Creating Chiefdoms: The Puget Sound Case,” *Ethnohistory*, 41, 2 (Spring 1994); Kenneth D. Tollefson, “In Defense of a Snoqualmie Political Chiefdom Model,” *Ethnohistory*, 43 (Winter 1996); Daniel Boxberger and Bruce G. Miller, “Evolution or History? A Response to Tollefson,” *Ethnohistory* 44, 1 (Winter, 1997); Jay Miller, “Commentary: Back to Basics: Chiefdoms in Puget Sound,” *Ethnohistory* 44, 2 (Spring 1997); David Schaepe, “Rock Fortifications: Archaeological Insights into Precontact Warfare and Sociopolitical Organization among the Stó:lō of the Lower Fraser River Canyon B.C.,” *American Antiquity* 71, 4 (2006).

<sup>32</sup> Siyá:m can mean a variety of things. In addition to someone who is a leader or respected in their community, it can also refer to someone who is rich or even to God. See Peter Dennis Peters, Interview with Sonny McHalsie, Randel Paul, and Richard Daly, 21 September 1988, SNA Oral History Collection, PPD-i-1, p. 36. Adeline Lorenzetto, explained that it was possible for there to be more than one siyá:m in a place, noting that “long ago there was no jealousy in them, I guess they’d come to talk together.” See Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto, Wilson Duff, Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook # 5, Summer 1950, Royal British Columbia Museum, (copies at SNA).

white people that made the chiefs, before that certain men lead. It was the good man.”<sup>33</sup> They explained though, that “in the early days” the two most respected siyá:ms were at Yale and Langley. Most notable was Chief Liquitim at Yale, who was highly respected along the river and chief during a period of important changes in the region such as the creation of reserves.<sup>34</sup> Mary Charles of Seabird Island—who was interviewed by one of Marion Smith’s students in 1945—referred to Liquitim as the Chief of the Stó:lōs, explaining that “the old Chief at Yale was boss of the whole river.”<sup>35</sup> In the 1950s, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Lorenzetto could name a siyá:m at Yale before Liquitim, but they emphasized that there were others, as well as the significance of Yale and the canyon as a place where important leaders were from. The strength of Yale and the canyon, and by implication its leaders, was the ready available resources of fish and game.<sup>36</sup> It is not clear how much of Liquitim’s power, or that of the Yale chief in general, came from the post-contact situation, and clearly the very existence of someone referred to as a “Chief” at Yale, rather than a siyá:m, is itself a product of contact. Regardless, canyon leaders such as Liquitim, and later his son Chief James, were powerful men who participated in, as well as reacted to, the changes to their places.

The different ways that British Columbia’s First Nations were affected by immigrant settlement has been explored by Wilson Duff in *The Impact of the Whiteman* (1964).<sup>37</sup> Duff argues that although the fur-trade period (1774-1849) was one of cultural growth and increased

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<sup>33</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto, Wilson Duff, Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook #6, Summer 1950, Royal British Columbia Museum, (copies at SNA).

<sup>34</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto, Wilson Duff, Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook #7, Summer 1950, Royal British Columbia Museum, (copies at SNA).

<sup>35</sup> Mary Charles, in Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (summer 1945), Royal Anthropological Institute (London Great Britain), MS 268:4 (Copies at B.C. Archives, Victoria B.C.), MS-2794.

<sup>36</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto, Wilson Duff, Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook #7.

<sup>37</sup> Wilson Duff, *The Indian History of British Columbia: the Impact of the Whiteman* (Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 1997).

prosperity, both the Colonial period (1849-1871) and the period following Confederation were times of decline.<sup>38</sup> Due to the integrated nature of culture, changes to one aspect produced indirect changes in others.<sup>39</sup> Duff's arguments provided the foundation for Robin Fisher's doctoral dissertation and book *Contact and Conflict: Indian -European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*.<sup>40</sup> In *Contact and Conflict*, Fisher argues that with the transition from the fur trade to the consolidation of settlement, First Nations were reduced from an integral to a peripheral role in British Columbia's economy. Whereas the fur trade could be viewed as a period of enrichment, the periods that followed were ones of cultural disruption exemplified by the loss of land and resources.<sup>41</sup>

Applying French philosopher Michel Foucault's ideas of the spatial dynamics of power relations to his analysis of Aboriginal space, Cole Harris in *The Resettlement of British Columbia* provides an ambitious exploration of the role of settler colonialism in British Columbia.<sup>42</sup> Challenging Duff's and Fisher's characterization of the fur trade as a period of cultural enrichment, Harris suggests that European powers created a climate of terror. In his follow-up study, *Making Native Space*, a study of the reserve creation process, Harris posits that it was the limiting and destruction of "Native space," that allowed for a settler colonial society to develop in British Columbia, and that the discipline of such a land system, defining where particular

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, pp. 74-88.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.106.

<sup>40</sup> See Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1992).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, pp. xi, 210-211.

<sup>42</sup> See Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia*. Harris applies Foucauldian ideas of power to his analysis on pp. 56-57, 64-65, 101, 185.

people could go, had an enormous effect on Aboriginal peoples.<sup>43</sup> Based almost entirely on archival research, *Making Native Space* provides the wider context of British colonialism before tracing the changing policies and reserve allocations of James Douglas, the Joint Indian Reserve Commission, Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, Peter O'Reilly, the McKenna-McBride Commission, and the Ditchburn-Clark Commission.

Carlson has noted that a multitude of factors including: disease, the gold rush, the creation of the Wagon Road and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), the increasing availability of wage-earning employment, the allocation of reserves, the governments' and settler societies' insistence that Aboriginals practice agriculture, and increasing restrictions and bans placed on the Aboriginal fisheries, resulted in significant population migration from the rocky canyon to the more arable lands down river.<sup>44</sup> In 1879 the population of the Yale Band was 267, by 1881 it was 143 and in 1914 this population had shrunk to a mere twenty-seven people.<sup>45</sup> Carlson has explored the significance of these migrations and their implications for the formation of collective identities, hypothesizing that movements away from the canyon built upon and reinforced existing "extended family social connections," to the potential detriment of village and tribal identities and the promotion of a sense of a collective Stó:lō identity.<sup>46</sup> Emphasizing that the "history of Aboriginal collective identity is the story of a complicated process of change, shaped as much by internal

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<sup>43</sup> Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance and Reserves in British Columbia*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), p. 271.

<sup>44</sup> Carlson, "Toward an Indigenous Historiography," p. 169.

<sup>45</sup> Carlson, "Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon," p. 150.

<sup>46</sup> See Carlson, "The Power of Place, the Problem of Time," p. 219; Keith Thor Carlson, "Stó:lō Migrations and Shifting Identities," in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 31.

divisions as external forces,” Carlson identifies the canyon fishery as an important contributor to the general social cohesion felt by the people of the Lower Fraser River.<sup>47</sup>

Carlson’s recent article “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon,” explores in detail the creation of reserves, and their impact on the Fraser Canyon. Most notable was the apparent creation of the five mile fishery by Commissioner Gilbert Malcolm Sproat on August 5<sup>th</sup> 1879,<sup>48</sup> as well as Sproat’s statement that the Yale fishery would be used by “these and other Indians who have resorted to the Yale Fisheries from time immemorial.”<sup>49</sup> The Indian commissioner’s use of terms such as “Yale Indians” and “Yale Indians Proper” is inconsistent and unclear.<sup>50</sup> Sproat even noted his own difficulty in labeling the people of the region, explaining that the “Indians of this lower portion of the river are one people and though claim to belong to particular villages move about constantly.”<sup>51</sup> As Carlson notes, it would have been difficult for Sproat to reconcile the continued use of canyon sites by people who resided down river for most of the year with the model of assigning reserves in other parts of the province.<sup>52</sup> Although the five mile fishery was not officially created until 1906 by Indian Reserve Commissioner A. W. Vowell, the people of the region clearly believed that fishing

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<sup>47</sup> Carlson, “The Power of Place, the Problem of Time,” p. 42; Carlson, “Toward an Indigenous Historiography,” p. 167.

<sup>48</sup> Cole Harris has identified the role of Commissioner Sproat as pivotal in the Native Land Question. See Harris, *Making Native Space*, p.71.

<sup>49</sup> See Library and Archives Canada [LAC], RG 10, vol. 3909, file 107, 297-3, “Fisheries Allotted to Indians in British Columbia.” This statement by Sproat continues to be significant today in disputes over access to the canyon fishery. See for example *R. vs. Peter Sumner Charlie*, Reasons for Judgment of the Honourable Judge Wendy A Young, (Chilliwack, Provincial Court of British Columbia, 24 January 2005), file # 15348-1, online, Provincial Court of British Columbia Judgment Database < [http://www.provincialcourt.bc.ca/judgments/pc/2005/00/p05\\_0057.htm](http://www.provincialcourt.bc.ca/judgments/pc/2005/00/p05_0057.htm)>.

<sup>50</sup> See LAC, RG10 vol. 3670, file 10770, to The Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Ottawa from Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, Indian Reserve Commission British Columbia in camp below Hope, 25 November 1878.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon,” p. 149.

reserves had been laid out by Sproat almost thirty years earlier, demonstrating the lived reality of the reserves and their boundaries.<sup>53</sup> From 1906 on, I:yem would officially be known as Yale Indian Reserve 22, originally set at fifteen acres, but finalized at 8.5 acres in 1914.<sup>54</sup>

Anthropologist Andrea Laforet's discussion of the Stó:lō's upriver neighbours, the Nlaka'pamux, in collaboration with community member Annie York in *Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories, 1808- 1939* outlines colonial changes in the village of Spuzzum (currently the second closest village to Yale in the canyon) that would have been similar to those that occurred around I:yem.<sup>55</sup> Laforet and York focus on factors that they suggest were more visible within communities and had more direct effects on the lives of the Aboriginal people of the Canyon, such as railways, settlers, wage work, missionaries, residential schools, and agriculture.<sup>56</sup> As a result of visible forms of colonization like the gold rush and railways, I:yem itself was physically changed. For example, with the gold rush in 1858, the terraces where Aboriginal people built their homes were invaded by thousands of miners.<sup>57</sup> The blasting associated with mining for gold reportedly destroyed a large flat rock that had been used as a spearing platform at I:yem.<sup>58</sup> The canyon was again invaded during the construction of the two national railways and highway, and once again I:yem was significantly altered. Andrea Laforet has noted that a cemetery at Yale was disturbed by the

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid, p. 164; It is significant that oral history understood Captain Jemmett to have surveyed the reserves of the five mile fishery, and that this came up during a dispute between Aboriginal families in 1903 over a particular fishing rock. One of the claimants, Billy Swallsea explained that the Natives believed I:yem to be part of the reserve land. This emphasizes awareness among Aboriginal people of the promises of the different reserve commissioners, and the reality of these boundaries in relations both between and within communities.

<sup>54</sup> LAC, RG10 vol. 3750, file 29858-10, To F. G. Keyes, Esq., Secretary Department of the Interior Ottawa from A. W. Vowell Indian Reserve Commissioner, Yale B.C., 26 April 1906; "Interim Report No. 59 of the Royal Commission of Indian Affairs for the Province of B.C.," to the Right Honourable Governor General of Canada and his honour the Lieutenant Governor General of B.C., (Victoria British Colombia, 3 December 1914).

<sup>55</sup>Andrea Laforet and Annie York, *Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories, 1808- 1939* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), pp. 2-3.

<sup>56</sup> Laforet et al.; see also Suttles, "The Persistence of Intervillage Ties," p. 222.

<sup>57</sup> Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia*, p. 104.

<sup>58</sup> Galloway, p. 38.

construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and that the bodies had to be moved to another location.<sup>59</sup> It is unclear what particular cemetery was destroyed, and where the bodies might have been moved, as the “Yale Indians” would have been affected by damages to any of the burial grounds of their immediate ancestors in the canyon.<sup>60</sup> There is evidence in the oral history that the railway construction disturbed graves at I:yem, and that bodies were also moved there as a result of the destruction of other cemeteries.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to the physical changes to the canyon, people’s relationships with their canyon places such as I:yem were further challenged by government regulations. In “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism, and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon,” Keith Thor Carlson notes the disastrous effects that the federal government’s 1884 amendment to the Indian act banning the potlatch had on the Fraser fishery. He argues that “without large-scale potlatch naming ceremonies families could not as effectively communicate (and thereby re-assert) their claims to hereditary property, the most important being canyon fishing sites.”<sup>62</sup> This would have been especially problematic when many people were moving away from the canyon, but retained some connection to it by continuing to fish there. For example, in the 1950s, Wilson Duff noted that because of population movements downriver and inter-marriage, the “nominal owners” of fishing sites in the canyon “have come to be scattered as far as Musqueam.”<sup>63</sup> Understandably,

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<sup>59</sup>Laforet et al., p. 87.

<sup>60</sup> See LAC, RG10 vol. 3604, file 2325, “Kamloops Agency- Correspondence Regarding Damage Done to a Church on the Spuzzum Reserve and to an Indian Burial Ground by the Canadian Pacific Railroad.”

<sup>61</sup> See for example Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, Interview by Amanda Fehr, Digital recording, Hope, B.C., 24 June 2007, Copies of interview available through SNA.

<sup>62</sup> Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon”; See also Carlson, “History Wars: Considering Contemporary Fishing Disputes,” in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 59.

<sup>63</sup>Duff, *The Upper Stalo*, p.78.



conflicts, both between families and larger groups, over rights to particular fishing spots would have become increasingly contested at this time.

The 1913 landslide at Hell's Gate (located between Yale and Boston Bar) took only a moment, but clearing out the passage took the United States Army Corps of Engineers more than a year.<sup>64</sup> Although located a few kilometers upriver from I:yem, the slide at Hell's Gate had a devastating effect on the Aboriginal fishery in the canyon as a whole, resulting in the destruction of subsequent salmon runs, that did not begin to recover until the 1940s when the government enforced new regulations. Geographer Matthew P. Evenden, who devotes a chapter to the slide at Hell's Gate and its repercussions in his book *Fish vs. Power: An Environmental History of the Fraser River*,<sup>65</sup> explains how in the summer of 1913, land slides from the construction of the CNR changed the course of the river, filled pools and eddies, and resulted in new restrictions imposed on Native fishers in the canyon and beyond.<sup>66</sup> Restrictions on the fishery and Aboriginal responses to them have also been extensively discussed by archivist and historian Reuben Ware in *Five Issues, Five Battlegrounds*, which traces the effects the slide at Hell's Gate had on the Aboriginal fishery. Ware explains that the initial government response was a total closure of the Fraser River fishery, although he notes that this application was irregular, and the fishery was reopened in August of 1914. The fishery was closed again in 1919 and not reopened until 1922, when Aboriginal people were able to obtain permits to take salmon for food.<sup>67</sup> Although since the Fisheries Act of 1888 Aboriginal fishers were only allowed to fish for

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<sup>64</sup>Crisca Bierwert, *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), p. 48.

<sup>65</sup>Matthew P. Evenden, *Fish versus Power: An Environmental History of the Fraser River* (New York: Cambridge University Press: 2004).

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, p.19.

<sup>67</sup> See Reuben M. Ware, *Five Issues, Five Battlegrounds: An Introduction to Indian Fishing in B.C. 1850-1930*, (Chilliwack B.C.: Coqualeetza Education Training Centre for Stó:lō Nation).

personal consumption,<sup>68</sup> until 1914 they had been permitted to sell fish in order to buy food. After 1914 the Fraser Canyon became a regulated space, where guardians were appointed to patrol the river, and ensure regulations were enforced; despite “strong and organized objection” by people who depended on the canyon fishery.<sup>69</sup> This regulated space was further complicated by the Canada and United States Pacific Salmon Convention (1937), which involved a catch agreement and the creation of a scientific restoration programme.<sup>70</sup> As a result, fishways were later created to help salmon navigate the river, providing them with places to rest and further altering the river itself.<sup>71</sup>

By the time that the Joint Dominion-Provincial Royal Commission, commonly referred to as the McKenna and McBride Commission, reached the Fraser Canyon in 1914, people were no longer living at I:yem year round, and their most immediate connection to the place was through the fishery there. In the immediate wake of the slide at Hell’s Gate and the resulting restrictions, fishing was a major issue that was noted by Chief James<sup>72</sup> at Yale who explained that none of the Indians had been able to get a sufficient supply of fish for the winter.<sup>73</sup> The fishing reserves were also an issue and in response to the commissioner’s question about how the reserves set aside for fishing in the canyon were being used, Chief James responded that, “we only use those for fishing purposes.”<sup>74</sup> This seems to suggest that by 1914, thirty years after the railway came through the area, people’s memories of I:yem as a village site and cemetery were less important

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<sup>68</sup> Carlson, “History Wars: Considering Contemporary Fishing Disputes,” p. 59.

<sup>69</sup> Ware, pp. 30-31, 34.

<sup>70</sup> The negotiation of this international salmon agreement was a condition of the United States sending their Army Corps of Engineers to assist in clearing out the passage at Hell’s Gate following the landslide.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>72</sup> Chief of Yale who was likely the son of Liquitim.

<sup>73</sup> “Lytton Agency,” *Agency Testimonies from the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, 1913-1916*, online, Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, <<http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/ourhomesare/testimonies.htm>>, pp. 324 -325.

<sup>74</sup> I:yem is included in the Yale Indian Reserve 22. “Lytton Agency,” p. 324.

to communicate to outsiders than the significance of these places as fishing grounds—albeit very old ones that were currently being threatened.<sup>75</sup>

In 1938 the province of British Columbia formally transferred full legal title of Indian reserves to the Dominion, including Yale Indian Reserve 22 and therefore I:yem.<sup>76</sup> As Cole Harris explains, by this time,

The lines around reserves now appeared to be fixed. The years of tinkering with them had passed, their boundaries were surveyed, their trusteeship located in Ottawa. Arguments about Native title, now silenced would not soon overturn this geography.<sup>77</sup>

The CPR bisected the old village and burials of I:yem, and the Trans Canada Highway cut through the site; which was not even a regular stopping point. Like all the canyon villages above Yale, I:yem was deserted in the winter and was now a place that was only used seasonally by certain families with fishing spots there.

It was into this context in 1938 that a memorial at I:yem was erected by the Stó:lō Coast Salish in memory of their ancestors and as a monument to their five mile fishing grounds. Representing one of the first times that the term Stó:lō was publicly used in print by the people of the Fraser Valley and Canyon to describe themselves, this large memorial in the shape of a Christian cross with a bronze plaque demonstrates ways in which Aboriginal people of the canyon had changed.<sup>78</sup> One could surmise that the creation of the memorial at I:yem was an important event in the shaping and articulation of changing Stó:lō identities, illustrating how

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<sup>75</sup> Possibly Chief James did not mention the cemetery because it was not within the scope of the discussion, as the Commissioner's question was likely related to the potential of practicing agriculture in the area rather than the meaning of these places to Aboriginal people.

<sup>76</sup> Harris, *Making Native Space*, pp. 167, 217.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

<sup>78</sup> Albert (Sonny) McHalsie believes that the memorial is the first time the term Stó:lō was publicly displayed by the people themselves, with the exception of the *Dream Book of the Stó:lō Chief*. See McHalsie, Interview, 24 June 2007; See also Carlson, "The Power of Place, The Problem of Time."

events work to consolidate collective identity in the face of colonial challenges. Yet, rather than simply preserving a particular event, the memorial at I:yem (the creation of which was an event in itself) was erected in response to the recent events that had transformed the Fraser Canyon. As such, it served as a reminder of a way of life that was quickly changing, and attempted to ascribe meaning to a place that, in 1938, was already being forgotten. It was an effort to express a particular collective identity, and make a statement to the government and non-Native society regarding Aboriginal rights to the canyon fishery. Fundamentally, the memorial conveyed the importance of ancestors and fishing to Stó:lō identities and understandings of their connections to the Fraser Canyon, and in this way can be read as an attempt to preserve these relationships in the face of change.

Located in one of the Stó:lō's six ancient cemeteries, the I:yem memorial is a large, white concrete cross atop two concrete blocks. The bronze plaque, which identified the I:yem memorial and the cemetery itself, was located just below the cross on one of the blocks—although it mysteriously disappeared in 2006. In the fenced-in area around the memorial there are three smaller white wooden crosses, marking burials in the cemetery.

The fact that a Christian symbol was used to mark an ancient cemetery, and to symbolize a traditional claim to the territory while preserving distinct Aboriginal histories and identities suggests the dynamic expressions of Stó:lō identity and the extent of their sophisticated engagement with the non-Native world. It emphasizes the relevance of incorporating ideas of both change and hybridity in discussions of Stó:lō identities and histories. In this sense, the Christian cross, while potentially a symbol appealing to a particular audience of settlers and government officials, could also be viewed as something innately Stó:lō by Aboriginal people whose ancestors

in the 1830s included prophets who predicted the coming of newcomers and taught aspects of the Catholic faith to people prior to the arrival of the first missionaries.<sup>79</sup>



**Figure 1.2 The I:yem Memorial circa 1940, photographed by David J. Martin (photo courtesy of Keith Thor Carlson)**

I:yem today is significantly different than it was in the nineteenth century, both in terms of the physical landscape and how people use and relate to it. It is a place that has been contested by competing families, and is currently associated with a larger dispute between the Yale First Nation on the one side and the Stó:lō Nation and Tribal Council on the other, over traditional territories as well as the question of who should be considered Stó:lō. I:yem remains a place of change. Although it is a meaningful place to many people for political and economic reasons, while for others its significance seems more personal, it will be suggested here that political and personal relationships with I:yem are not completely separate.

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<sup>79</sup> See, Keith Thor Carlson, “Prophesy,” in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, pp. 154-156.

This exploration of I:yem draws on several bodies of literature, exploring works specific to the Coast Salish and the Fraser Canyon, place making, memory studies, and a variety of anthropological and historical theorists. Firstly, place, and its relationship with identity and change, has played an important role in the analysis of several recent works about the Stó:lō-Coast Salish in B.C.<sup>80</sup> History and place are important to the Stó:lō people, validating social and political status and determining personal and collective identities. Certain forms of knowledge and sacred historical information are located in the landscape and accessible to properly trained individuals.<sup>81</sup> The proper names of particular places also contain information about what has happened there, or how the site can be used. As a result, Carlson has posited that the land itself can act as an archive for the Stó:lō people.<sup>82</sup>

The work of Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, Director of the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre, explores the importance of place and place names in Stó:lō history and culture, and has helped to shape this study.<sup>83</sup> In his publications, and in conversations shared with me during my time as a participant in the joint University of Saskatchewan - University of Victoria Stó:lō Ethnohistory Fieldschool in 2007, Mr. McHalsie emphasized that it is the landscape that “informs a shared Stó:lō identity,” and that it is by examining place names that the Stó:lō are able to “see the land from the perspective of [their] ancestors.”<sup>84</sup> He stresses that place names are subject to change, that “newer names replace older ones,” and that this process of “naming and

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<sup>80</sup> See for example, *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*; Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon”; *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*.

<sup>81</sup> Carlson, “Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact,” in *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous European Contact*, ed. by John Sutton Lutz, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), pp. 48-49; See also, Wayne Suttles, “Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Class Among the Coast Salish,” in *Coast Salish Essays* p. 501.

<sup>82</sup> Carlson, “The Power of Place, the Problem of Time,” p. 78.

<sup>83</sup> I am indebted to Mr. McHalsie for initially drawing my attention to this project and for sharing some of his extensive knowledge of I:yem with me.

<sup>84</sup> McHalsie, “Halq’emélem Place Names in Stó:lō Territory,” p.134.

renaming is not new,” that it is not simply a result of colonialism.<sup>85</sup> Especially those place names that relate to sqwelqwel (historical events) are naturally “mutable, changing with the dynamic history of that place.”<sup>86</sup> McHalsie’s insight into changing Stó:lō places reminds one that changes in Stó:lō relations with I:yem, and their understandings of that place, should not merely be reduced to the effects of colonialism. In many ways the memorial at I:yem was an effort to preserve memories of older relationships with that place by literally inscribing them and their names into the landscape.

This study has been influenced by recent scholarship emphasizing the spatial elements of memory, many of which use monuments or heritage sites to explore the complex relationships between places and identity.<sup>87</sup> Studies, such as those by geographers Ian Robertson, Tim Hall, and Nuala Johnson, demonstrate the importance of focusing on the local and specific, while dealing with broader themes such as conflict over memory (or counter memory), highlighting disputes over public acts of commemoration.<sup>88</sup> Folklorist and historian Martha Norkunas identifies her work as fundamentally being about the intersections of the “personal and public, the singular and the

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Grappling with the relationship of history, memory, and identity, most of these works acknowledge the contributions of Maurice Halbwachs’ work on collective memory and annaliste scholar Pierre Nora’s revitalization of studies focusing on memory. Although Halbwachs’ and Nora’s works have clearly been influential in the historiography, this study builds on more recent contributions in the field that focus on relationships rather than the dichotomies between history and memory, and allow for more nuances in their focus on the local. See, for example, Martha Norkunas, *Monuments and Memory: History and Representation in Lowell Massachusetts* (Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington, 2002); *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2003); Nuala C. Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 2003); *Heritage, Memory and the Politics of Identity*, ed. Niamh Moore and Yvonne Whelan (Ashgate: Burlington VT: 2007).

<sup>88</sup> Ian Robertson and Tim Hall, “Memory, Identity and the Memorialization of Conflict in the Scottish Highlands,” in *Heritage Memory and the Politics of Identity*, p. 20; Johnson, p. 167.

collective, memory and history.”<sup>89</sup> Yet, important questions regarding the intersection of the idea of place and the physical place itself still remain unexplored.

Memories are intricately connected to particular places, accordingly the relationships between memory and I:yem will be an important component of this study. To date, a significant amount of scholarship has centred on the various relationships between memories and particular places. These studies demonstrate that places are important sites of memory, that memory lives as long as it serves a social role, and that it is possible for multiple and equally valid meanings to be attached to particular sites. For example, Fernando Santos-Grenaro, in his research with the Yanesha of the Peruvian Central Andes, has suggested that history and memory are actually inscribed into the landscape and that multiple memories can co-exist in the same place. In this model, landscape does not simply act as a mnemonic device, but rather becomes memory itself.<sup>90</sup> In 2003, Leslie and David Green embraced aspects of Santos-Granero’s notion of landscape becoming memory; actually stating that in studies of landscape, memory, and historical consciousness, it was “all but a truism.”<sup>91</sup> However, they viewed Santos-Granero’s tendency to simply “conflate place with event” as problematic, suggesting instead that places assert a set of relationships.<sup>92</sup> For them it is the way that an individual relates to the environment that is significant. As has already been shown within the Stó:lō context, Indigenous relationships with I:yem have clearly changed over time, albeit often as a result of specific events.

In her book *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power*, anthropologist Crisca Bierwert emphasizes the importance of looking at places not simply in “a

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<sup>89</sup>Norkunas, pp. 10-11.

<sup>90</sup> Santos-Grenaro, p. 132.

<sup>91</sup> Green et al., p. 284.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, pp. 285-287.



moment but in momentum,” especially in studies of place around the Fraser River, which by its very nature is always in motion.<sup>93</sup> Fishing sites, like those at I:yem, are naturally places of change; however, the rates of change at these places were often accelerated and significantly more pronounced due to colonial acts such as the construction of the CPR. Bierwert also suggests that Stó:lō people’s relationships with a place can be altered by either change to that landscape, like railway construction destroying a fishing rock, or by changes in human activities, such as the use of gill nets rather than dip nets.<sup>94</sup> It is important to note that changes to the landscape and human activities are clearly related to, and inform, one another.

The changing relationships that the Stó:lō have had with I:yem, as well as their understandings of those relationships, reflect the dynamic tensions between continuity and change and highlight the value of a study that follows the approach advocated by historical anthropologist Marshall Sahlins.<sup>95</sup> According to Sahlins, there can be “no history without culture. And vice versa in so far as in the event, the culture is neither what it was before nor what it could have been.” Essentially, Sahlins emphasizes the dialectic relationship between events and structures.<sup>96</sup> In any attempt to look at identity and change, such acknowledgment and reconciliation is essential. Sahlins is also critical of Michel Foucault, and those who follow him,<sup>97</sup> for the reduction of the individual to an “essentialized social subject,” with no agency.<sup>98</sup> Arguably one of Sahlins’

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<sup>93</sup> Bierwert, p. 44.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> See Marshall Sahlins, *With Apologies to Thucydides: Understanding History as Culture and Vice Versa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

<sup>96</sup> Marshall Sahlins, “The Return of the Event, Again; With Reflections on the Beginnings of the Great Fijian War of 1843 to 1855 between the Kingdoms of Bau and Rewa,” in *Clio in Oceania: Towards a Historical Anthropology*, ed. Aletta Biersack (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), pp. 45, 81-82.

<sup>97</sup> See for example Harris, *Making Native Space*; Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia 1900-1950*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998). Kelm refers directly to her use of Foucault on p. 220.

<sup>98</sup> Sahlins, *Apologies to Thucydides*, p. 145.

objectives in his discussion of the relationship between events and structure is to come to terms with the complex relationship between individual agency and the cultural ideals that inform and give meaning to the structural features that enable group cohesion.<sup>99</sup>

In addition to the theoretical works of Marshall Sahlins, this study also builds on the ideas of historical philosopher R.G. Collingwood. Although writing in an earlier time, when culture as it is currently understood was not a primary concern for historians, Collingwood's idea of history fits quite well with the theories of Sahlins. Like Sahlins, Collingwood is concerned with ideas of individual agency, viewing history as an attempt to "discern the thoughts of its [an events] agent."<sup>100</sup> Collingwood's discussion of progress is especially helpful to this discussion of individual agency as well as continuity and change. He explains that belief in progress can only exist on the condition of:

Knowing what the old way of life was like, that is, having historical knowledge of his society's past while he is actually living in the present he is creating: for historical knowledge is simply the re-enactment of past experiences in the mind of the present thinker. Only thus can the two ways of life be held together in the same mind for a comparison of their merits, so that a person choosing one and rejecting the other can know what he has gained and what he has lost, and decide that he has chosen the better.<sup>101</sup>

This discussion of progress is similar to Sahlins' advocacy of the dialectic relationship between continuity and change, while providing the important reminders that change is not necessarily an improvement or progress, the possibility of differences existing within communities, the importance of continuity for some people, and the potential for resistance to change. All of these ideas inform this study of I:yem and its memorial, given that in some ways, the memorial

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid, pp.125-194.

<sup>100</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History Revised Edition with Lectures 1926 – 1928*, ed. Jan Van Der Dussen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 213.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, p. 326.

represents how some Aboriginal people of the Fraser Canyon resisted aspects of colonial changes, based upon their own knowledge and understandings of how their places were before.

Although the purpose of approaching issues of Native place through a micro-historical examination of events, thoughts, and structure, is in many ways an attempt to include both individual agency and cultural phenomena, the phrasing of questions in terms of “Aboriginal understandings,” and the idea of collective memory itself seem to contradict this ideal. How can one discuss Native understandings, Native identities, and collective memory without falling into either the essentialist trap of superorganic theories of culture<sup>102</sup> or Foucauldian notions of institutional power? Recognizing that current understandings of the past are, partially at least, shaped by the present, this project also draws upon recent scholarship dealing with the idea of historical consciousness. Peter Seixas, the director of the University of British Columbia Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, promotes the definition of historical consciousness as “individual and collective understandings of the past, the cognitive and cultural factors that shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understandings to those of the present and future.”<sup>103</sup> By looking at the way that Stó:lō people themselves historicize the events associated with I:yem and the creation of the memorial there—that is to say, by examining Stó:lō understandings of I:yem over time—an open engagement with broader Aboriginal understandings

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<sup>102</sup> The superorganic refers to an “anthropology of subjects without agency, merely reflecting and expressing an omnipotent cultural order,” evident in the works of anthropologists A.L. Kroeber and Leslie White in the early twentieth century. See, Sahlins, *Apologies to Thucydides*, p. 144.

<sup>103</sup> See Sharon Macdonald and Katja Fausser, “Towards European Historical Consciousness” in *Approaches to European Historical Consciousness: Reflections and Provocations*, ed. S. Macdonald (Hamburg: Koerber Stiftung, 2000), p. 10, as quoted in Peter Seixas, “Introduction,” in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. Peter Seixas, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 10.

of place becomes possible. The idea of historical consciousness also serves to link these past events with each other as well as with the present.<sup>104</sup>

Seixas' inclusive concept of historical consciousness allows for the existence of different types of historical consciousness in any one culture, and indeed in any one individual.<sup>105</sup> Such a broad definition of historical consciousness is similar to the avocation for the exploration of plural histories in *Between History and Histories: The Making of Silences and Commemorations*.<sup>106</sup> Although dealing primarily with questions of class, focussing on the power relationships that “emerge both within and against larger social processes,” suggesting that struggles occur within groups as well as between them and those who dominate them,<sup>107</sup> the concept of multiple histories is applicable to this study fitting well with the theories of Sahlins and Collingwood and aiding in a discussion of relationships between the past and the future, the individual and collective, and change and continuity.

There are important works that take Aboriginal understandings of the past seriously and make them the focus of their studies,<sup>108</sup> and several that have acknowledged differences within Coast Salish communities;<sup>109</sup> however, little work has been done to specifically explore some of

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<sup>104</sup> See *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Building on literature on memory and commemorations, anthropologists Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith caution against historians' “invocation of anthropology to describe the ‘otherness’ of the people whom they study,” as it “runs the risk of homogenizing their subjects of study, reducing the changing internal dynamics to a few stereotypical distinctions – male and female, working or un-employed religion a or b, black or white- distinctions that may or may not at any given time and place have many significant part in the transformative tension that wreak havoc, change and hope among the dominated and oppressed.” See Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith, “Introduction,” in *Between History and Histories: The Making of Silences and Commemorations*, ed. Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 17.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>108</sup> See for example, Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen?*; Carlson, “Orality about Literacy”; Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon.”

<sup>109</sup> The roles of social networks, villages, and families has been highlighted in Suttles, “The Persistence of Intervillage Ties”; Bruce G. Miller highlights a tendency for communities themselves to perpetuate the idea of a harmonious past while deemphasizing social conflict in present in order to manage relationships with the outside

the variety and difference within and between these Aboriginal groups. In his discussion of identity and politics in the present, political scientist Tim Schouls has emphasized that “identity is also about conflict,” and that individuals and their communities are often drawn into conflict with one another over the expression of their identities.<sup>110</sup> It is because certain aspects of these identities are so important that they become points of conflict and tension. Although it is not beneficial to only focus on the fractures in and between communities, it is important to recognize them and the variety of interpretations of I:yem and the memorial there. Complementing the theories of Sahlins, Collingwood, and the concept of historical consciousness, the incorporation of the idea of histories offers a way to ensure that personal experiences and understandings of I:yem are not lost or over generalized in an ensuing narrative.<sup>111</sup>

Identity, collective memory, historical consciousness, continuity and change, and histories are many words that essentially share common concerns. Seeming to echo Marshall Sahlins, historian Mark Salber Phillips and political scientist Gordon Schochet explain in the preface to *Questions of Tradition*, that it is ‘investigating processes of continuity and change,’ that is at the core of many of these studies.<sup>112</sup> Phillips later goes on to suggest that many of these terms are simply the most recent being used to discuss the domain of tradition,<sup>113</sup> which he defines as the

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world. See, *The Problem of Justice*, p. 13; Carlson notes current tensions regarding fishing within Stó:lō communities suggesting that there are two dimensions to them; conflicts between families and those between the Yale First Nation and the Stó:lō. See, Carlson “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon,” p. 145; In a different context Carlson explains that there are similarities/commonalities amongst this group of people in addition to differences, and chooses to focus on the former while acknowledging the latter. See Carlson, “Introduction,” *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>110</sup> Tim Schouls, *Shifting Boundaries: Aboriginal Identity, Pluralist Theory and the Politics of Self Government*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), pp. 1-2.

<sup>111</sup> This approach, in incorporating multiple narratives, is similar to Crisca Bierwert’s in *Brushed by Cedar* that incorporates multiple vantage points while avoiding the creation of a dominant narrative. See Bierwert.

<sup>112</sup> Mark Salber Phillips and Gordon Schochet, “Preface,” *Questions of Tradition*, ed. Mark Salber Phillips and Gordon Schochet (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004). p x.

<sup>113</sup> Mark Salber Phillips, “Introduction,” *Questions of Tradition*, pp. 3-4

“large and complex problem of cultural transmission,” and the “ways that practices and beliefs persist over time and become integral and often definitive parts of the cultures that surround and preserve them.”<sup>114</sup> However, the term “tradition,” as Phillips notes, is a loaded one that is often associated with ideologies and the politics of traditionalism.<sup>115</sup> Perhaps a simpler term to encompass the complex issue of cultural transmission over time, as well as the idea of change in continuity and vice versa, is the idea of historically meaningful relationships,<sup>116</sup> which is what Sahlins and others seem to be pushing the focus of historical studies towards.<sup>117</sup> Although there is room in the idea of relationships for fractures and disagreements, there is not the artificial opposition of strict dichotomies; allowing for individual agency and a variety of perspectives.

The general idea of focusing on relationships is a useful way to approach the application of Sahlins’ concept of change and continuity, and his push for scholarship to move away from dichotomies: Native versus newcomer, colonizer versus colonized and other dichotomies such as private and public or political and personal. More specifically this thesis attempts to look at some of the changing relationships that the Stó:lō have had with I:yem, and their understandings of these relationships, or their historical consciousness, drawing attention to connections between the past, present, and the future. Employing the concept of histories, and recognizing that there is not a single “Native voice” or even a single Stó:lō voice for that matter, this is an exploration of some of

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<sup>114</sup> Phillips and Schochet, “Preface,” p. LX, See also Phillips, “Introduction,” p. 25.

<sup>115</sup> Phillips, “Introduction,” pp. 3-5

<sup>116</sup> The study of history is essentially the study of relationships. Analysing changing relationships over time is typically the focus of analysis and interpretation, whether it is explicitly stated or not. Most historians focus their discussions on the interactions of people, but as can be seen in the historiography, there has been an increasing interest in the relationships between people and places as well as the past and the present.

<sup>117</sup> See Sahlins, *Apologies to Thucydides*; Collingwood; Seixas; Sider and Smith. See also Richard White, *The Organic Machine*, (Hill and Wang: New York, 1995). In the introduction, White explains that he is increasingly viewing history as the study of relationships. He emphasizes that he means to do more than write a human history alongside a natural history and call it environmental history, it is the history of the relationship itself that he is interested in. See White, *The Organic Machine* p. ix. It is the goal of this study to engage with the *relationship* between individuals and I:yem.

the specific relationships that people of the Fraser Canyon and Valley have had with I:yem. It is possible to begin to explore differences within and between Aboriginal communities, rather than simply colonial relationships, providing more space for individual agency.

In this study, understandings of the past are often shaped by current political concerns, especially those relating to the conflicts between the Stó:lō Nation / Tribal Council on the one hand and the Yale First Nation on the other, but should not be reduced to them. Original interviews were conducted with five members of the Stó:lō community: Archie Charles, Matilda Gutierrez, Sonny McHalsie, Rita Pete, and Steven Point. These individuals were interviewed because of their personal connections to, and knowledge of, I:yem, and their willingness to participate. One of the limits of this thesis is that, despite efforts to meet with and interview members of the Yale First Nation, I was unable to talk with anyone who officially represented that community.<sup>118</sup>

Notwithstanding this, every effort has been made to include the perspectives of members of the Yale First Nation using alternative sources. Court transcripts, extant political statements from the Yale First Nation's Agreement in Principle from their ongoing treaty negotiations, and references made in newspapers by Yale chief Robert Hope provide a distinct interpretation of the significance of I:yem.

In addition to my own interviews, newspaper articles, court records and political statements, I also rely on earlier oral interviews that have been conducted with Stó:lō and Yale elders and earlier ethnographic field notes of anthropologists Wilson Duff and Marion Smith and amateur ethnographer Oliver Wells. This use of field notes and interview transcripts is primarily

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<sup>118</sup> Although I was able to have some informal conversations with community members, sent a letter of introduction to Chief Robert Hope of Yale, and attempted to meet him in person, I was informed that the Yale First Nation would not be able to consider my research request until their current treaty negotiations are complete.

because many details specific to I:yem, the memorial there, and people's understandings of the Fraser Canyon and Valley are not included in published works. Furthermore, by going directly to the field notes I am able to access less filtered versions of Stó:lō understandings of their places. At the same time, however, I recognize that these accounts were shared in specific contexts and should not simply be viewed as Stó:lō understandings of their places, but rather Stó:lō understandings of their places shared with and interpreted by an interviewer. For example, Wilson Duff's field notes reflect the questions he asked, his relationships with his informants, what people chose to share with him, what he actually recorded, and to an extent how he interpreted their discussions. Although his interpretation is less apparent in his notes than in his published works, it still provides cues for my own analysis. This relationship between interviewer and interviewee is important not only in evaluating ethnographic field notes, but also in my own oral interviews. The relationships that I established with those that I interviewed, the questions I asked, and my presence as an outsider, likely impacted how people discussed I:yem and represented their relationships with the Fraser Canyon to me—determining to an extent what aspects they chose to emphasize and what they elected to ignore.

Language is connected to how places are known and understood, and is the means by which people communicate their relationships with particular landscapes. It is therefore potentially significant that all of the sources used in this thesis (including the original interviews that I conducted) are in English. The number of fluent Halq'emélem speakers has dramatically declined since 1938, a change that is likely related to the residential school experience. In 1993 there were between fifty and seventy-five fluent speakers of upriver Halq'emélem (the majority of whom were over the age of sixty), in 2000 there were less than a dozen, and today there are



only three fluent speakers.<sup>119</sup> In many ways, these linguistic changes are related to and mirror the broader changing relationships between the Aboriginal people of the Fraser Canyon and Valley and their canyon places. Just as the Stó:lō have continuously made efforts to maintain and re-establish connections with places, there have been significant community attempts to record and regain the Halq'emélem language, such as Sonny McHalsie's exhaustive place names research. Language provides cues into other ways of knowing, and can represent how understandings of place have changed and continued over time. While this thesis is in English, some Halq'emélem terms, primarily place names, ancestral names, and certain concepts are needed to engage with Stó:lō ways of knowing and to access particular aspects of their relationships with place. However, the issue is not simply one of language but of communication. Even though I interviewed some people conversant in Halq'emélem, they endeavoured to explain their history and certain terms to me in a way that I would understand and find meaningful. In this regard the concepts discussed have been translated across time, language and cultures.

Accounts are not only shaped by political affiliation and the nature of our individual meetings, they are also influenced by participants' own goals, family connections, and biographical experiences to the potential detriment of accuracy.<sup>120</sup> This is not to suggest that an accurate interpretation of the events at I:yem exists or that an accurate account of "what happened" is the singular goal of this study. Rather, the goal includes examining how these events were and continue to be understood by the Stó:lō, as facts, truth, occurrence, and personality blur and inevitably inform one another. As Alessandro Portelli explains, it is the errors, inventions, and

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<sup>119</sup> David A. Smith, "History Revealed through Salishan Languages," in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 21.

<sup>120</sup> Bruce Granville Miller notes the importance of respecting elders while recognizing that they have particular perspectives influenced by politics, family and personal histories. See Bruce Miller, *The Problem of Justice*, p. 27.

myths that “lead us through and beyond the facts to their meanings.”<sup>121</sup> Similarly, Julie Cruikshank has suggested an alternative approach to treat “oral tradition not as evidence, but as a window on the ways the past is culturally constituted and discussed in different contexts.”<sup>122</sup> However, as Carlson argues the recognition of a distinction between “what happened” and understandings of “what happened” is significant in the interpretation.<sup>123</sup> While it is necessary to be sensitive to the problems of seeking only an accurate explanation of what happened, it is essential to acknowledge that not all narratives are equally valid or merely reflections of present concerns.

The use of memory in historical studies has often been critiqued, perhaps most notably by R.G. Collingwood, who stated that “memory is not history.” Collingwood’s concern was not about the accuracy of memory but rather the tendency for historians to equate memory with fact rather than viewing it critically as a source.<sup>124</sup> The importance of being critical of sources is complicated when attempting to be respectful of those sharing them, and leaving room for other ways of knowing. Cruikshank has cautioned that:

The well-intentioned but uncritical use of oral traditions developed in one cultural context as though they can be equated with tangible historical evidence may lead to misrepresentation of more complex messages in the narrative.<sup>125</sup>

Similarly, in his recent article on Indigenous historiography and memory, Keith Thor Carlson demonstrates the importance of considering the meaning of oral accounts in their own settings, explaining that the Stó:lō have their own ways to classify history and distinguish between good

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<sup>121</sup> Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 2.

<sup>122</sup> Cruikshank, p. 347.

<sup>123</sup> See Carlson, “The Power of Place, the Problem of Time,” p. 38.

<sup>124</sup> Collingwood, p. 252.

<sup>125</sup> Cruikshank, p. 346

and bad histories.<sup>126</sup> An example of this is evident in Wendy Wickwire's discussion of Native historiography that demonstrates the importance of naming sources, and the use of 'oral footnoting'.<sup>127</sup> Yet, rather than simply analysing these oral sources, it is also necessary (when possible) to turn the critical gaze towards myself and question my role in our interviews and assumptions in interpreting what has been shared with me. Pushing this discussion even further, Carlson has suggested that in order to truly begin to understand Aboriginal histories, scholars must first meet them on the "unstable intellectual middle ground and from that more tenuous position work towards understanding."<sup>128</sup>

It is in response to this call for instability that the following meditation on the significance of place is offered. The following thesis embraces the contradictions between and within narratives as it attempts to access the meaning inherent in them. There are certain themes that occur throughout what follows; using the memorial as an anchor, this is an exploration of the many relationships that the Stó:lō have with I:yem and how these relationships are connected to what came before and will come after. This meditation has been divided into two case studies, each of which explore the relationships between the past, present and future at a specific moment in time and as a result rely on slightly different types of sources. In chapter two, the context in which the memorial at I:yem was created and the individuals involved is discussed, as well as the potential significance of the memorial in 1938. This reconstruction is based almost entirely upon petitions to the government, newspaper articles, the ethnographic field notes of anthropologists working in the region in the 1940s and 1950s and some more recent oral histories. Chapter three focuses on the

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<sup>126</sup> Carlson, "Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory," p. 68.

<sup>127</sup> Wendy Wickwire, "To See Ourselves as the Other's Other: Nlaka'pamux Contact Narratives," *Canadian Historical Review* 75, 1 (1994), p. 18.

<sup>128</sup> Carlson, "Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory," p. 68.

variety of current understandings of the significance of the memorial and I:yem, and is primarily based on oral interviews that I conducted in June 2007 and recent court transcripts. Recognizing the relationship between continuity and change will serve as a reminder that individuals and communities continue to define their relationships with I:yem on their own terms, and that it is they that set the parameters of what can change and what must be preserved.

## CHAPTER TWO: CREATING THE I:YEM MEMORIAL

Over the burial site of many generations of Indians, a white cross now stands blessed and dedicated, at Yale, B.C., following a picturesque ceremony on Eayem reserve Sunday afternoon. Archbishop W. M. Duke carried out the dedication, watched by taciturn bucks in high-crowned hats, and squaws in shawls and gay velvets. High commendation was given the Indians by his excellency [sic]: ‘I congratulate you on your faith in the teaching of Jesus Christ concerning the resurrection of the body, also for your gratitude to God for his providential care in the harvest of Fraser river salmon which through the years has supplied you so bountifully with food.’ History of tribes of the Fraser Valley was traced by Harry Steward and Dennis Peters, chiefs, also by Father Patterson. In attendance were Oblate Fathers O’Grady and Campbell. The cross bears the inscription: ‘Eayem Memorial 1938 AD, Erected by the Stalo Indians. In memory of many hundreds of our forefathers buried here, this is one of our six ancient cemeteries within our five mile Native fishing grounds which we inherited from our ancestors. R.I.P.’

- *Chilliwack Progress*, Wednesday August 17<sup>th</sup> 1938<sup>1</sup>

The dedication of the I:yem Memorial, which incorporated and blended aspects of Roman Catholicism with an articulation of a distinct Stó:lō identity and assertion of rights, emphasizes the roles of both change and continuity in Stó:lō relationships with, and their understandings of, the Fraser Canyon. As interesting and singular as this particular event may sound, the I:yem Memorial was not the first monument created by Aboriginal people in the Fraser Canyon to take the form of a Christian cross. The Spintlum Memorial, located in a park in Lytton British Columbia (B.C.) eighty-seven kilometres upriver from I:yem, was erected on April 16<sup>th</sup> 1927 to preserve the memory of Chief David Spintlum (1812-1887) of the Nlaka’pamux and make a

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<sup>1</sup> “Stallo Tribe Erects Cross to Ancestors,” *The Chilliwack Progress*, Wednesday August 17<sup>th</sup> 1938. Copy of article courtesy of Mabel Nichols. The spelling of “Eayem” and “Stalo” are inscribed on the memorial; throughout the rest of the thesis these terms appear in the form standardized in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* unless quoting directly from an earlier source. Picture of the I:yem Memorial courtesy of Stó:lō Nation Archives [SNA].

claim to the territory.<sup>2</sup> The extent to which these events are related is unclear; however, they suggest that the I:yem memorial was erected during a period when Aboriginal people along the Fraser River were exploring innovative ways to define and assert themselves. Both memorials can, therefore, be viewed as illustrative of larger issues in Coast Salish history and the history of Native-newcomer relationships.

While drawing on this context, the following discussion remains specific to the creation and dedication of the memorial at I:yem, attempting to make sense of this event and its implications for Stó:lō understandings of their places in the Fraser Canyon. Ethnohistorian Keith Thor Carlson concludes his recent article “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon” with a brief discussion of the I:yem Memorial proposing that it was principally created to honour the memory of the ancestors “whose remains had been re-interred after developments associated with the building of Canada’s two transcontinental railways”; it represented “a bold assertion of shared Stó:lō collective identity and a broad communal title to the canyon fishery”; it “signified a recognition that the principal threat to Aboriginal fishing rights now came from non-native interest, and implicitly that internal disputes should be handled internally.”<sup>3</sup> What follows is a more detailed historical reconstruction of events leading up to, and the motivations of the people involved in, the creation of the I:yem memorial. I use these specific examples as launching points to discuss more general aspects of Stó:lō understandings of the Fraser Canyon before further analyzing the dedication of

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<sup>2</sup> Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, Director, Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre, has also questioned if the I:yem Memorial was related to or influenced by the Great Fraser Midden Cairn that was also erected in 1938. See, Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, “We have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to us,” in *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, ed. Bruce Granville Miller, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon,” in *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada’s Native Pasts*, ed. Ted Binnema and Susan Neylan, (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2007), p. 168.

the memorial itself. Building upon Carlson's assessment of the memorial's meanings, this chapter employs a theoretical framework that focuses on relationships. In particular, I highlight those aspects of Stó:lō relationships with I:yem that could be considered non-negotiable in the face of rapid change and conflict, both between Natives and newcomers and among the Stó:lō themselves.<sup>4</sup> Put succinctly, this chapter is an exploration of some of the many ways that the Aboriginal people of the Fraser Valley and Canyon understood I:yem and its associated memorial in 1938.



**Figure 2.1 Dedication of I:yem memorial, *Vancouver Sun*, 20 August 1938**

The memorial at I:yem articulates a collective Stó:lō identity, but also reflects the particular individual and familial motivations of its creators. To begin ascertaining this viewpoint one might ask what were the roles of the individual actors involved in creating this memorial, for it is these people (and their intentions as has been argued by historical anthropologist Marshall

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<sup>4</sup> This analysis combines the theories of Marshall Sahlins, R. G. Collingwood, and historical consciousness, while allowing for the existence of multiple perspectives.

Sahlins and historical philosopher R.G. Collingwood) who are essential to the study of the past. Evidence shows that political activist Dennis Siya:mia Peters<sup>5</sup> of Hope and Chief Isaac James of Ruby Creek were instrumental in the creation of the memorial at I:yem. It was a place where both men had personal connections and could claim rights to fish. According to tribal historian Bob Joe, who in 1962 shared his memories of the creation of the I:yem Memorial with amateur ethnographer Oliver Wells, “some of the old timers, Dennis Peters and Isaac James and several of the others they wanted to put up a monument for this large grave...I:yem it’s called; I:yem that’s the name of that place.”<sup>6</sup> Dennis S. Peters and Isaac James were brothers-in law, married to sisters Suzanne and Cecilia Charlie, and likely had their own individual and familial motivations in creating the memorial at I:yem.<sup>7</sup> This is significant, as Sahlins proposes that individual’s relationships with the collective are “mediated by particular biographical experience in familial and other institutions.”<sup>8</sup> These relationships would certainly have been influential among the Stó:lō in the 1930s who had a high regard for kinship, and whose members traced a “web of all relationships in all directions [bilateral] for several generations.”<sup>9</sup> Through an exploration of the connections that Dennis S. Peters and Isaac James had to I:yem and their roles

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<sup>5</sup> Contrary to the description in the *Chilliwack Progress*, Peters was not a Stó:lō chief. Although Chilliwack Chief Harry Stewart also spoke at the dedication, my research indicates that he was not someone who was directly involved in creating the memorial at I:yem. As such, he will not be a focus of this discussion.

<sup>6</sup> Bob Joe, who fished at Bell Crossing (I:yem), had previously acted as an informant for anthropologists Marian Smith and Wilson Duff as well as linguists Norman Luman and Jimmie Harris, and would have been about eighty years old when Oliver Wells interviewed him at his home in Tzeachten. Duff explained that Bob Joe was a good informant whose primary “fault” was “a slight tendency to apply modern interpretations to information.” Bob Joe was formally involved in politics serving as the Chilliwack Valley District Vice President of the Native Brotherhood of B.C. See Richard Hope, Interview with Sonny McHalsie, Richard Daly, Yale B.C., 1988. SNA Oral History Collection, HR1988, p. 11; Duff, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley British Columbia*, Anthropology in British Columbia Memoir No. 1, (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1952), p. 9; Bob Joe, “Bob Joe at Tzeachten February 8, 1962” in *Oliver Wells Interview Collection (1961-1968)*, transcript, SNA, p. 103.

<sup>7</sup> Genealogical information courtesy of Alice Marwood, Stó:lō Nation Genealogist.

<sup>8</sup> Marshal Sahlins, *With Apologies to Thucydides: Understanding History as Culture and Vice Versa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 151.

<sup>9</sup> Wilson Duff, *The Upper Stalo*, p. 76.



in creating the memorial there, insights into the broader context in which the monument was created emerge. It is through these insights that it is possible to ascertain some of the specific motivations of the memorials' creators and explore some of the ways that they understood I:yem.

In many ways, the I:yem Memorial can be viewed as the culmination of Dennis S. Peters' lifelong defence of fishing rights in the canyon, and his work to compel the federal government to address what was commonly referred to as the "land question."<sup>10</sup> Although he was never a chief, Peters is described as a "leading member of the Stahlo Tribes,"<sup>11</sup> and a "protest leader from the Hope Band."<sup>12</sup> Archivist and historian Reuben Ware in *Five Issues, Five Battlegrounds* explains how Dennis S. Peters filed a suit for damages against the federal government regarding the fishing restrictions imposed after the disastrous slide at Hell's Gate in 1913.<sup>13</sup> Peters was a signatory (and possibly author) of a letter to the editor of the *West Yale Review* in July of 1914, protesting these restrictions and demanding that they be lifted and the Aboriginal people of the region be compensated.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, in 1922, in response to a three-year closure of the Native fishery, Peters gave testimony on behalf of Chief Pierre of Hope, Edmund Lorenzetto of Ohamil and others, regarding the unfairness of the restrictions against Aboriginal fishers. He demanded that the restrictions be removed, and outlined Aboriginal rights with regards to the land question itself. This statement was recorded by Shetland Island ethnographer and secretary to the Allied Tribes of

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<sup>10</sup> Peters died in 1944. Alice Marwood, Stó:lō Nation Genealogist.

<sup>11</sup> Obituary of Dennis S. Peters, courtesy of Alice Marwood, Stó:lō Nation Genealogist.

<sup>12</sup> Reuben M. Ware, *Five Issues Five Battlegrounds: An Introduction to Indian Fishing in B.C. 1850-1930*, (Chilliwack B.C.: Coqualeetza Education Training Centre for Stó:lō Nation), p. 31.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> See, "Letter to the editor of the *West Yale Review*" signed Chief James, Chief Michael, Chief Jimmy, Chief Paul and Dennis S. Peters, *The West Yale Review* 25 July 1914, as quoted in Andrea Laforet, "Folk History in a Small Canadian Community," (PhD Dissertation, UBC, 1974), p. 182.

B.C., James Teit, and passed on to the Department of Indian Affairs.<sup>15</sup>

Peters' involvement in these petitions is significant, as in the 1914 letter he was the only named participant who was not a chief, and in 1922 he is acknowledged as *the* person giving the testimony. Although the letters of 1914 and 1922 are consistent with earlier communications with the government by the Aboriginal people of the region,<sup>16</sup> these particular pieces of correspondence have a similar tone. Similarly, the interpretation of Aboriginal title and fishing rights apparent in this correspondence is also evident in oral accounts of Peters' knowledge of the so called "Indian land question." This in turn raises questions around the issue of authority, and, essentially, the relationship between knowledge and the right to speak for a larger group of people. It seems that Peters was expressing the concerns of those Aboriginal people who continued to fish in the canyon, while drawing on the status of prominent community members to add legitimacy to the claim based, in part, on his own extensive knowledge and interpretation of the past.

Dennis Peters' knowledge and interest in Aboriginal rights and claims, was clearly part of a broader collective Stó:lō concern; nonetheless, his involvement also reflected his personal beliefs

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<sup>15</sup> LAC, RG10 vol. 11302, file 158/30, Testimony of Dennis S. Peters on behalf of Chief Pierre, Edward Lorenzetto and Others, 3 February 1922, in *Report on the Hope Band, February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1922*, by J. A. Teit, as quoted in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, ed. Keith Thor Carlson, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2001), p. 186. Dennis S. Peters was a first cousin to Pierre Ayessick. Edmond Lorenzetto was married to Pierre Ayessick's daughter Adeline. See Carlson, "Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon," p.172, fn 51; Alice Marwood, Stó:lō Nation Genealogist.

<sup>16</sup> There were a considerable number of petitions to the government from the people of the Fraser Canyon and Valley regarding the canyon fishery, in addition to, and at times a part of, those dealing with the land question in general. The issues, such as commercial fishing, government regulations against Aboriginal people, arguments for Aboriginal rights and the preservation of the fishery are quite consistent, although clearly influenced by specific contexts and events, such as the slide at Hell's Gate. See for example, Petition to Governor Seymour, 19 February 1867, Great Britain Colonial Correspondence, CO 60/27 Seymour to Cardwell, B.C. Archives Victoria B.C., as quoted in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 171; Letter to the Minister of Marines and Fisheries, 10 October 1902, in *Five Issues, Five Battlegrounds*, as quoted in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 175; "Lytton Agency," *Agency Testimonies from the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, 1913-1916*, online, Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, <<http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/ourhomesare/testimonies.htm>>, p. 311; "Memorial to the Hon. Frank Oliver, minister of the interior, Ottawa signed by the chiefs of the Shuswap, Couteau (Thompson), Okanagan, Lillooet, Stalo (Lower Fraser), Chilcotin, Carrier and Tahitan tribes of the interior, B.C.," British Columbia, 1911, CIHM microfiche series.

and comprised a significant component of his own identity. This is evident in the memories of his grandson, Peter Dennis Peters<sup>17</sup> who was interviewed several times in the 1980s. Peter Dennis Peters explained that although his grandfather was not a chief, “he was really for land claims, he was really interested... it was something that he talked about just about every day...he knew the dates and all that, which I can’t remember.”<sup>18</sup> Dennis S. Peters used his knowledge of Aboriginal rights and government promises not just in petitions and newspaper articles, but also in discussions with his family, to share and preserve his relationships with particular places in the canyon fishery. By mobilizing his knowledge and expressing it through public mediums such as the memorial and associated ceremony he sought to protect and maintain Stó:lō connections with I:yem and the canyon. This in turn gave voice to the rights of the Stó:lō as a group as interpreted by Dennis S. Peters.

Dennis S. Peters' 1922 testimony opens a door to his understandings of the canyon fishery, and therefore I:yem. It provides an elaboration of the several lines of cast bronze text on the memorial. Whereas the memorial itself does not explicitly define who had rights to the five mile Native fishery, the 1922 testimony asserts that all of the Stó:lō bands from Chilliwack to Yale inclusive had rights to fish and cure Salmon there.<sup>19</sup> The continued need to emphasize the rights of down river fishers to use the territory, which Reserve Commissioner Gilbert Malcolm Sproat

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<sup>17</sup> Peter Dennis Peters, born at Katz in 1912, was the son of Alec Dennis Peters and Christine Dolan. Like his grandfather, he was also involved in politics serving as the chief of the Hope Band for about nineteen years. In 1985 he was chosen as one of the Stó:lō Grand Chiefs. See Peter Dennis Peters, Interview with Larry Commodore, 21 July 1985, Stó:lō Tribal Council Oral History, Copies available at SNA, 85-SR4.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, pp. 2-3.

<sup>19</sup> Testimony of Dennis S. Peters on behalf of Chief Pierre, Edward Lorenzetto and others, as quoted in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 186. It should be noted that the area from Chilliwack to Yale does not constitute the entire Stó:lō territory, but rather is what Wilson Duff referred to as the “Upper Stalo.” Significantly, this is the region that Keith Thor Carlson argues was the most impacted by migrations from the canyon. See, Duff, *The Upper Stalo*; Keith Thor Carlson, “The Power of Place, The Problem of Time: A Study of History and Aboriginal Identity,” (PhD Dissertation, UBC, 2003).

described as a “five mile fishery,” highlights the impact of government restrictions at the time, and their perceived threat to the collective rights of people who had recently been relocated.<sup>20</sup>

Essentially, the Aboriginal people from Chilliwack to Yale felt the need to restate and assert their control over the area their parents and grandparents called their permanent home. Thus, Peters stated, “we must be allowed to fish and cure salmon at our fishing rocks between Yale and Five mile creek...every summer during July and August and also in September if necessary.”<sup>21</sup>

Beyond asserting Stó:lō rights to their five mile fishery and territorial claims to the canyon, the memorial at I:yem made an important statement about Stó:lō authority over their places. The reference to the five mile Native fishery “which we inherited from our ancestors” implies a relationship with this place that was fundamentally Stó:lō, regulated by their own system of kin-based ownership rather than government acts and the decisions of reserve commissioners. In fact, identifying the monument as the “Eayem Memorial” (and not the Memorial of Yale Indian Reserve 22) rejected the imposed colonial name for this place. The I:yem Memorial asserted the authority of the Stó:lō in determining their own relationships with the Fraser Canyon and memorialized a distinctly Stó:lō *place* rather than a colonized *space*.

Dennis S. Peters was concerned with the changing relationships between the Stó:lō and the Fraser Canyon. To him, certain aspects of these relationships were non-negotiable. In describing his understandings of these shifting relationships, Peters noted:

These fishing rocks are the places from time immemorial many hundreds of Indians from Chilliwack and up river used to catch and cure their winter supply of Salmon. This was in the days when

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<sup>20</sup> See for example, LAC RG 10, vol. 3909, file 107, 297-3, “Fisheries Allotted to Indians in British Columbia;” LAC, vol. 3750, file 29858-10, To F. G. Keyes, Esq., Secretary Department of the Interior Ottawa from A. W. Vowell Indian Reserve Commissioner, Yale B.C., 26 April 1906.

<sup>21</sup> Testimony of Dennis S. Peters on behalf of Chief Pierre, Edward Lorenzetto and others, as quoted in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 186.

the Indians were numerous and depended mainly on Salmon. Now a days [sic] only a few Indians go up to these fishing places. The Indians are much less in numbers now and depend chiefly upon farming and other work for a living. They are content to take only a few salmon and only some old people put up winter supplies.<sup>22</sup>

Significantly, by 1922 the canyon and I:yem were primarily known as “a fishery.” Even this interpretation of the canyon’s past focused on its role as a place to catch and cure fish making no mention of the associated village sites that had been there. Yet, the fishery itself had been altered, and as Peters explains, was only being used by a few. This implies that the majority of people with connections to the canyon who had migrated out of the region were no longer returning there to fish.<sup>23</sup> Broader changes such as the adoption of farming and wage work affected the way certain people perceived their relationships with the canyon, raising questions about the number of people that Peters’ testimony, and later the memorial at I:yem can be seen to represent. If government regulations were responsible for keeping people away, the petition could be read as an attempt by those who still fished in the canyon to re-assert such connections more broadly. In this way, the importance of the canyon fishery clearly extended beyond issues of economics or subsistence. People had found new economic opportunities down river, but more to the point, as Dennis S. Peters explained, “we will never consider any amount of compensation nor substitution for the fish, we want the fish themselves.”<sup>24</sup> For Peters what was important was that the Stó:lō people themselves continued catching salmon in the places where their ancestors had lived and fished, and that in the future their descendents would inherit this

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> This is supported by Patrick Charlie (Dennis S. Peters’ brother-in-law and Wilson Duff’s only Yale informant). Patrick Charlie noted that during the summer all the people “used to come up fishing,” as “each one had a fishing place” (emphasis added). Duff, *The Upper Stalo*, p. 9 See, Patrick Charlie, Wilson Duff, Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook # 1, 1950. Royal British Columbia Museum, (copies at SNA).

<sup>24</sup> Testimony of Dennis S. Peters on behalf of Chief Pierre, Edward Lorenzetto and others, *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 186.

right as well. Maintaining rights to fish in the canyon, and as a result relationships with places there was non-negotiable; this was a factor of Stó:lō life that Peters felt must not be lost. It was these non-negotiable factors that the I:yem Memorial would later express. It was an effort to promote continuity in the face of impending loss.

In addition to addressing fishing rights and non-negotiable aspects of Stó:lō relationships with the canyon, Peters' 1922 testimony uses the broader context of broken government promises to demonstrate the importance of formal education and the significance of written records to current and future negotiations. To Peters, knowledge and writing were innovative, powerful, tools that could be used to preserve Stó:lō relationships with I:yem in the face of change. His extensive knowledge of government promises, including the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* and promises made by B.C. Governor's James Douglas and Frederick Seymour,<sup>25</sup> laid the foundations for Stó:lō demands that the federal government address the land question. Dennis S. Peters emphasized that the people of the region never surrendered Aboriginal title to their old tribal territories, demanded compensation, and asserted the continued existence of special rights to hunt and use crown lands. Identifying that promises had been broken in the past because they had not been written down, he explained that "the Indians in those days believed the words of those big men in authority and they never thought of asking for written agreements nor their words in writing."<sup>26</sup> As a result, Dennis S. Peters stressed the importance of formal education in his testimony and to his family. His grandson, Peter Dennis Peters explained that Dennis S. Peters pushed for education because "you had to have that to talk to the government, you know or whatever, become a lawyer, or doctor, or

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid; There is oral history about Dennis S. Peters' knowledge of the promises of Governor Seymour and Douglas, notably that a quarter of each dollar was promised to the Indians. See, Peter Dennis Peters, Interview with Larry Commodore, 1985, SNA, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Testimony of Dennis S. Peters on behalf of Chief Pierre, Edward Lorenzetto and others, as quoted in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 187.

things like that.”<sup>27</sup>

An important component of education as a perceived requirement for dealing with the government was the need for written records of promises made to ensure that they would be kept. Therefore, the question of why Dennis Siya:mia Peters and Isaac James felt it was necessary to include alphabetic literacy within the I:yem Memorial relates, in part, to who its intended audience was. The written word itself was seen to carry a significant amount of authority, essential when communicating with the Canadian government.<sup>28</sup> Beyond this, as Carlson demonstrates in his forthcoming article, “Orality about Literacy: The ‘Black and White’ of Salish History,” Stó:lō people associate the act of writing with those of Xexá:ls, the transformers, leaving their marks on the world and setting things right.<sup>29</sup> Rather than challenging ideas of Stó:lō identity, in this context leaving a written record at I:yem worked to preserve them.<sup>30</sup> In some ways the creation of the memorial at I:yem, which can be viewed as an attempt to inscribe memory and meaning into the landscape and create permanency in a time of change, mirrored the acts of the transformers

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid; See also, Testimony of Dennis S. Peters on behalf of Chief Pierre, Edward Lorenzetto and others, as quoted in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*.

<sup>28</sup> At the time, school attendance was high, and some Stó:lō leaders were keeping journals through this era. For example according to his great-grandson Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, Dennis S. Peters kept a type of journal. Patrick Charlie also had a journal that is now in the possession of his descendents. Alessandro Portelli has emphasized the importance of recognizing that orality and writing for over a century have not existed separately, warning against dichotomizing the two. He explains, “if many written sources are based on orality, modern orality itself is saturated with writing.” See Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), 52; Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, Interview by Amanda Fehr, Digital recording, Hope, B.C., 24 June 2007, Copies of interview available through SNA.

<sup>29</sup> Carlson, “Orality about Literacy: The “Black and White” of Salish History,” in *Intersections of Orality and Literacy: Talking About Writing and Writing About Talking*, ed. Carlson, Fagan, and Shostack (mss currently under review with University of Toronto Press), p. 179.

<sup>30</sup> It is also significant that with the exception of the terms “Eayem” and “Stalo,” the text of the plaque is in English. This may be due to the fact that a widely recognizable orthography for Halq’emélem (which was a spoken language) did not exist at the time. The use of English also speaks to who the intended audience of text was—emphasizing that it was also meant to be understood by non-Halq’emélem speaking government officials and settlers.

themselves.

The pursuit for an agreement with the government was not done in isolation and speaks to the interconnectedness of the various tribal groups of the region. Dennis S. Peters and the Stó:lō had connections with other Aboriginal communities and organizations, highlighting the importance of broader connections in their understandings of local places. Notably the petition of 1922 detailed the intentions of its supporters to “stand with the organized tribes of B.C. until such a time as a fair settlement with the governments of all our rights and grievances has been arrived at.” This stands as a reminder of the knowledge that the people of the Fraser Valley and Canyon retained, not only of their ancestral places and histories, but also of contemporary struggles and issues (such as regulations over fishing and the prohibition of the potlatch). Dennis S. Peters was remembered as someone who always spoke of Squamish leader and activist Andy Paull of the Allied Tribes, as a person who he greatly respected.<sup>31</sup> In fact, in a discussion that reveals his perception of the Native-newcomer disputes of the era, Peter Dennis Peters remembered his grandfather saying that he pictured Andy Paull and Reverend Kelly in Ottawa discussing the land claims in 1927 as “little pups in the middle of a bunch of bulldogs all around.”<sup>32</sup>

Although the work of the Allied Tribes led to a full parliamentary investigation of their claims and the land question in Ottawa, the 1927 amendment to the Indian Act (section 141) essentially prohibited Aboriginal people from pursuing land claims in the courts.<sup>33</sup> This ban was not lifted until 1951. Political Scientist Paul Tennant has noted that Aboriginal people often

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<sup>31</sup> Peter Dennis Peters, Interview with Larry Commodore, 1985, SNA.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.7.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal People and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia 1849-1989* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1990), pp. 105-113.



linked the abovementioned section 141 of the Indian Act with section 140, that prohibited the potlatch and as a result of amendments of 1914 and 1918 essentially made any gathering organized by Indians themselves or discussion of land claims illegal.<sup>34</sup> Building on earlier petitions and land claims, the monument with its minimal text was created at a time when there were few legal options for Aboriginal claimants. In this way, the I:yem Memorial, the creation of which necessitated meetings of Aboriginal leaders and the collection of money, was itself a certain type of claim that asserted rights, territory, and Stó:lō resistance to government control.

The involvement of Dennis S. Peters and his family in the Native Brotherhood of B.C., demonstrates the complex, and at times contradictory, nature of group identities while fundamentally emphasizing the relationships between local and broader networks in addressing the all important issues of Aboriginal rights. Paul Tennant has noted the uniqueness of the involvement of Oscar Peters (Dennis S. Peters' son) in the Native Brotherhood, as he was one of the few Catholic Coast Salish leaders from a reserve without access to tidal waters active in an organization that had originally been a northern Protestant coastal fishermen's union.<sup>35</sup> According to the leaders of the Native Brotherhood, it was because of links with commercial fishing and Protestantism that their organization was not as strong in the interior as the Allied Tribes had been.<sup>36</sup> In this argument, which is supported by Tennant, Protestantism is considered to be especially problematic to Missionaries and many Catholic Aboriginal people who viewed the Brotherhood's position against residential schools as an attack on their beliefs and

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<sup>34</sup> Tennant, pp. 101, 111.

<sup>35</sup> Oscar Peters was the Chief of the Hope Band and served as a Vice President of the Native Brotherhood. See Peter Dennis Peters, Interview with Larry Commodore, 1985; Tennant, p. 127; LAC, C-11-2 vol. 11299, Letter to Mr. G. Williams, Native Brotherhood of B.C., Vancouver B.C., from Oscar D. Peters, Katz B.C. with attached Endorsements and Contentions Harrison, Yale and Chilliwack Valley Districts, 29 April 1944.

<sup>36</sup> Tennant, p. 119.

institutions.<sup>37</sup> Conversely, it is suggested here that Aboriginal identities were often more complicated than such an argument suggests. For example, Dennis S. Peters, whose family identified as Catholic and who was involved in erecting a cross-shaped memorial (the dedication of which was attended by the Archbishop of Vancouver and several oblate missionaries) did not support Catholic missionary schools. In fact, his 1922 petition specified that the Stó:lō did not want churches “to have any control” over their education.<sup>38</sup> These apparent contradictions in Dennis S. Peters’ affiliations, and the social/religious hybridity of his identities, illustrate the role of syncretism as well as the ability of individuals and groups to navigate multiple and supposedly paradoxical identities. Even in the midst of such multifaceted identities there were certain issues, notably the preservation of connections to particular places, which seemed to trump all others and allow for a blending of some beliefs.

It is worth exploring how unique the Peters family’s links to the Native Brotherhood were, and the extent to which they informed their visions of a common Stó:lō cause. Indeed, it is evident from the “Endorsements and Contentions of the Harrison, Yale and Chilliwack Valley districts of the Native brotherhood” in 1944 that the organization received support from several Aboriginal people of the area. This petition, signed by Yale District Vice President Oscar D. Peters, the Chilliwack Valley District Vice President Robert Joe, and nine chiefs<sup>39</sup> of the region, not only highlights the extent of broader connections that the Stó:lō had to the Native Brotherhood, but also their cooperation with one another on a more local level in attempting to

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Testimony of Dennis S. Peters on behalf of Chief Pierre, Edward Lorenzetto and others, as quoted in *Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p.187.

<sup>39</sup> Chief Albert Lewis, Chief John Hall, Chief Albert Cooper, Chief Harry Joseph, Chief John Ohamil, Chief Michael Peters, Chief Harry J. Peters, Acting Chief Willie George, and Chief Peter Pete.

preserve their rights to fish in their five mile Native fishery.<sup>40</sup> In many ways, the I:yem Memorial embodied these overlapping identities, challenging strict dichotomies; using English text and a Christian cross, the memorial asserted broad traditional Aboriginal rights to the canyon while remaining specific and locally meaningful.

The memorial itself, articulating a distinct Stó:lō collective identity with the use of a Christian symbol and plaque written in the English language, raises important questions about the nature of interpersonal and cross-cultural communication. Although it may be tempting to view the memorial cross simply as an example of missionary influence (and it is important to acknowledge that outside views of Aboriginal peoples could affect how people viewed themselves)<sup>41</sup> it is impossible to determine the extent to which the memorial at I:yem and its articulation of particular Stó:lō identities were indeed influenced by outsiders. While Archbishop Duke may have had his own agendas and attitudes regarding the Indian Mission in B.C., it is unlikely that his role in the memorial extended beyond his appearance and blessing at the dedication. In fact, my research revealed nothing in Duke's papers at the Archdiocese Archives to indicate any direct involvement with Native people or Indigenous rights. Rather, the initiative of the Stó:lō people themselves in the creation of the memorial was highlighted by Father Patterson "who congratulated the Indian people for providing this monument on this historic site."<sup>42</sup>

Just as there can be no one Stó:lō perspective, there were differing attitudes and experiences amongst members of the church and its missionaries. Father Patterson, who was

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<sup>40</sup> Letter to Mr. G. Williams, Native Brotherhood of B.C.

<sup>41</sup>For a work that focuses on how Aboriginal self-identity can be affected by non-Aboriginal perspectives see Niels Winther Branoë, *Indian and White: Self Image and Interaction in a Canadian Plains Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975). Focusing on issues of morality and values in identity formation, Branoë's work draws heavily upon sociological theories.

<sup>42</sup> "Indian Memorial is Blessed by Archbishop," *B.C. Catholic*, August 20<sup>th</sup> 1938. Clipping courtesy of Anthea Seles Records Manager/Archivist/Privacy Coordinator at the Archdiocese of Vancouver.

apparently a much beloved missionary to the Aboriginal people in the Fraser Valley and Canyon at the time, likely had his own goals in carrying out his work that may have differed from those of the Archbishop in Vancouver.<sup>43</sup> Mary Charles explained in 1945 that Father Patterson wanted “Indian life written down and preserved,”<sup>44</sup> a statement that implies that he likely had taken a personal interest in the memorial at I:yem. Although a missionary, it is unclear whether Patterson had a greater influence on the Stó:lō or vice versa, as the evidence suggests a respectful dialogue. Carlson has noted that the use of the term Stó:lō on the memorial likely reflected the Indigenous realities at the time, as it was the people of the region using it to refer to themselves and their ancestors.<sup>45</sup> Stó:lō identity is dynamic, and in this way, Christianity may be viewed as something that is distinctly a part of this identity. A holistic view requires us to focus on how the Stó:lō viewed themselves and their places, not simply how their identity was built in relation to outsiders.

Those who were later involved in creating the I:yem Memorial shared the common experience of fishing at the site during a time of intense change. It was these shared lived experiences that determined what aspects of Stó:lō relationships with place were deemed non-negotiable.<sup>46</sup> In 1944 Oscar Peters explained how it was an “apparent fact, that in the pioneer

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<sup>43</sup> See for example, the personal correspondence of Father Vernon Campbell, who describes Father Patterson and his missions in great detail. HEB2171.V53C, Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa Canada.

<sup>44</sup> Mary Charles, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (summer 1945), Royal Anthropological Institute (London Great Britain), MS 268: 4, (Copies at B.C. Archives, Victoria B.C.), MS-2794.

<sup>45</sup> Carlson, “The Power of Place, The Problem of Time,” p. 269.

<sup>46</sup> Dennis S. Peters’ family fishing spot above the old cemetery at I:yem was near the specific places where several other families fished. His cousin Pierre Ayessick’s family also fished at I:yem at Qwél:es or “Whale.” Peter Dennis Peters noted that Louis Jackson fished at Bell Crossing at I:yem, and that there were others, such as the Charlie family across the river at Aseláw. Notably, Isaac James and Bob Joe also had claims to fish near I:yem. See Peter Dennis Peters, Interview with Sonny McHalsie, Randel Paul, and Richard Daly, 21 September 1988, SNA Oral History Collection, PPD-i-1, pp. 20, 33; Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto, Wilson Duff Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook # 5, 14 September 1950; Wilson Duff, Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Washington, 1952, p. 50, as quoted in Cinnamon A. Pandur, “Transformer sites and S\_w\_o\_wiyam: An examination of the published and unpublished works of Wilson Duff,” (University of Saskatchewan/University of Victoria Stó:lō Ethnohistory Fieldschool Paper, 2005) SNA, p. 6.

days as told by our elders” including Dennis S. Peters and several of the others who fished at and near I:yem, “that fish was noted to be so immensely abundant along the Fraser Canyon, that when a rock was cast upon a school of fish it momentarily rolled atop the fish before it sank beyond.”<sup>47</sup> Aboriginal fishers at I:yem would have experienced the aftermath of the slide at Hell’s Gate first hand with the resulting government restrictions and closures. Such lived experiences reveal the merits of R.G. Collingwood’s assertion that individuals who have knowledge of what has changed can evaluate the change itself (or the past in their present).<sup>48</sup> The I:yem Memorial was an evaluation of changes to the canyon, finding the damaged salmon runs, altered fishing spots, and increased government regulations of the present wanting. In response to this the plaque articulates what aspects of the Stó:lō relationships with the Fraser Canyon had to be preserved—namely the ancestors, their memory, and the continuation of a fishery there.

I:yem became not only a place to be preserved, but also a politicized theatre where people met to discuss the land question. Stó:lō Elder Matilda Gutierrez, nee Jackson, who is recognized as a keeper of traditional Stó:lō stories and whose grandparents fished near I:yem,<sup>49</sup> explained leaders would meet there while they were fishing to discuss the land question.<sup>50</sup> She said when they gathered together they ritualistically started off with the statement “this is our land and we have to take care of everything that belongs to us.”<sup>51</sup> I:yem was central to these discussions, and

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<sup>47</sup> Letter to Mr. G. Williams, Native Brotherhood of B.C.

<sup>48</sup> See, R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History Revised Edition with Lectures 1926 – 1928*, ed. Jan Van Der Dussen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 326.

<sup>49</sup> Mrs. Gutierrez emphasized that when she was five or six she would sit beside her grandmother on the ground and listen to her grandparents and others talk about the land question. See, Matilda and Alan Gutierrez, Interviewed by Sonny McHalsie, 4 March 2001, SNA Crown’s Promise Project.

<sup>50</sup> In addition to her grandparents, Mrs. Gutierrez noted that Dennis S. Peters, Patrick Charlie, Harry Uslick, the Malloway’s Shi:l Malloway, Pat Charlie, Patrick Charlie from Yale and the Coopers from the States would discuss the land question while drying fish at I:yem. See, Matilda and Alan Gutierrez, Interviewed by Sonny McHalsie, 4 March 2001, SNA.

<sup>51</sup> Matilda Gutierrez, Interviewed by Sonny McHalsie, at Coqueleetza in the early 1980s, as quoted in Albert

in many ways, it was because of the associated fishery and dryracks that families and leaders were able to come together at a time when the Indian Act essentially disallowed any meetings organized by Aboriginal people themselves. These discussions in turn added to contemporary interpretations of I:yem as a political space where people discussed broken promises, colonial changes to the landscape, government regulations and fundamentally vocalized what components of their canyon places needed preservation in the face of impending change. This is not to suggest that I:yem was ever a place for just fishing, as there would have always been a social and political element to the fishery there where so many families formerly lived and gathered. Rather, its political aspects took on a new relevance and priority in how Aboriginal people of the time viewed the place itself. One wonders if the idea to create a monument at I:yem arose out of one of these discussions, and if this group of canyon fishers made plans for the monument or collected funds for it during one of their meetings.

There is oral evidence that Dennis S. Peters and Isaac James collected donations from the Stó:lō people to build the I:yem Memorial, and it is likely that the people themselves paid for the monument.<sup>52</sup> Both the money collected and the context of larger political gatherings at I:yem suggest that its memorial was a communal project that represented the beliefs and goals of several Stó:lō individuals and families at the very least. That the monument was specifically erected at I:yem, a communal fishing and political place, demonstrates its role in taking care of the land that belonged to the Stó:lō people and especially a place where they did not live year

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(Sonny) McHalsie, "We have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to us," in *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, ed. Bruce Granville Miller, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 85.

<sup>52</sup> Although there is documentary evidence of community members requesting funds from the government to maintain their cemeteries, I could not find any correspondence with the Department of Indian Affairs requesting funds for the cemetery at I:yem. See McHalsie, Interview, 24 June 2007; LAC, RG10 C-9656, vol. 8095, file 987/36-7-41-9 part 1, "New Westminster Agency, Fraser District - Correspondence regarding a cemetery site on the Ruby Creek Reserve 6 for the Yale Band," 1935-1936.

round.

It is somewhat ironic that such a concentrated effort to prevent further changes from occurring would have altered how those involved understood their canyon places. In this way, the attempt to prevent change is itself a transformation of sorts. One contemplates the cost of Dennis S. Peters' intensive involvement in the land question, and how it may have affected not only his own understandings of places there, but also those of future generations. When asked if Dennis S. Peters told him stories, Peter Dennis Peters explained that his grandfather "really talked a lot about the land question you know." Rather, it was his grandmother who talked to him about the canyon and particular places there.<sup>53</sup> This explanation demonstrates how central the land question was to the ways that Dennis S. Peters related to, and spoke of, places such as I:yem, at the expense of other aspects. Perhaps more importantly, Peter Dennis Peters draws attention to a gendered element of place relationships. Clearly the intergenerational sharing of the particular meanings of canyon places would have been significant in the attempt to preserve certain types of connections there; but, whereas Dennis S. Peters primarily communicated meaning through political petitions and a concrete memorial, it was his wife, Susan Charlie who principally interpreted these places for their descendants. While it is simplistic to only view these changes along gender lines as there were women such as Matilda Gutierrez and her grandmother present at discussions of land claims while fishing at I:yem (and of course Susan Charlie shared her understandings of the canyon with Peter Dennis Peters who was a boy), they hint at the extent to which gender shaped understandings of place. Moreover, they reveal that the land

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<sup>53</sup> Peter Dennis Peters, Interview with Sonny McHalsie et al., 1988, SNA, p. 23.

question was not central to how everyone related to the Fraser Canyon at this time.<sup>54</sup>

I:yem was also a place of conflict between families over particular fishing spots, including some lengthy disputes over the place where Dennis S. Peters' family fished. In his article, "Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon," Keith Thor Carlson includes a case study of a dispute over a fishing rock at I:yem at the beginning of the twentieth century between Billy Swallsea on the one side, and Dennis S. Peters' mother's family on the other (represented principally by Paul Skitt, who was likely Peters' maternal uncle).<sup>55</sup> It is noteworthy that Dennis S. Peters was later involved in creating a memorial detailing Stó:lō rights to fish at the very place where the fishing spot his mother and her family claimed had been threatened and contested by other Stó:lō. This suggests that in addition to the clear political purpose of the memorial, Peters was also influenced by his own personal and familial connections to I:yem in creating the memorial there. Asserting Stó:lō rights to fish in the places of their ancestors, the I:yem Memorial by implication proclaims Peters' families continued right to fish where their ancestors had at I:yem.

The erection of the Memorial did not signal an end to internal contestation over fishing sites. In 1945, Mrs. Vincent Peters<sup>56</sup> claimed that I:yem had always belonged to her family, and was critical of Dennis S. Peters, his son Oscar Peters, and even the original Siya:mia.<sup>57</sup> This

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<sup>54</sup> While there are clear hints in this discourse of gendered elements of Stó:lō relationships to and understandings of place, the current evidence does not allow for a detailed discussion.

<sup>55</sup> Carlson posits that Paul Skitt may have been a brother to the wife of Peter of Katz's landing who was Dennis S. Peters father. The exact relationship between Dennis S. Peters and Paul Skitt is uncertain, but it is likely that they were closely related as Skitt willed everything to Dennis S. Peters. See, Carlson, "Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon," pp. 159, 168; Alice Marwood, Stó:lō Nation Genealogist.

<sup>56</sup> Born in 1906, Bertha James, daughter of Francis Paul James and Mary Margaret Camille, married Vincent Josh Peters who does not appear to have been directly connected to Dennis S. Peters' family. Alice Marwood, Stó:lō Nation Genealogist.

<sup>57</sup> Mrs. Vincent Peters, explained that the "the original one" was nicknamed Siya:mia because someone was



conflict over I:yem is potentially linked to, or a continuation of the earlier dispute between Paul Skitt and Billy Swallsea that Carlson has discussed. As in Carlson's description of the earlier dispute, Mrs. Vincent Peters notes the involvement of non-Native authorities, and explains that the fishing spot was surveyed as a result.<sup>58</sup> If this is indeed a continuation of the same quarrel it highlights the longevity and depth of such clashes between families. The continued weight in 1938 of a much earlier dispute once again draws attention to Dennis S. Peters' own familial motivations in erecting the I:yem Memorial. Mrs. Vincent Peters emphasized how relevant the conflict continued to be to those families involved, explaining that while drinking alcohol either Dennis or Oscar Peters declared that the two families were "enemies over I:yem."<sup>59</sup> Keith Thor Carlson has described tensions and conflicts both within and between families as well as larger groups over access to these territories as "history wars,"<sup>60</sup> and it is into this context of competing versions of history, and therefore memory that the I:yem Memorial was created.

Rights to fishing spots were connected to particular hereditary names, and Dennis Peters' hereditary name "Siya:mia," was contested within his family. The name Siya:mia is derived

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making fun of him, as he was actually a slave from Alert Bay who clubbed people, while noting her own personal connections to I:yem, such as that her mother's father's family was buried there. This is a clear example of one's family's version of history emphasizing their own status and asserting their claim to territory. For a discussion of these "history wars" see, Carlson, "Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact," in *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous European Contact*, ed. by John Sutton Lutz, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007) p. 49; Mrs. Vincent Peters, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (summer 1945), MS 268:4 (15) (Copies at B.C. Archives).

<sup>58</sup> See Carlson, "Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon."

<sup>59</sup> Mrs. Vincent Peters explained that this "one" was married to a cousin of hers. Dennis S. Peters was married to her second cousin once removed, Suzanne Charlie whose mother's family had links to I:yem— "half mile above the graveyard is a fishing place called 'legs stretched apart' (to step from rock to rock)." It should be noted that in Stó:lō society "first second and third cousins were considered to be like brothers and sisters because they shared the same grandparents." McHalsie, "We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us," p. 100; Mrs. Vincent Peters, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (summer 1945), 268: 4 (15); Wilson Duff, Unpublished MA Thesis, as quoted in Pandur, p. 6.

<sup>60</sup> Carlson, "Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory," p. 49; Carlson, "Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon," p. 149.

from the word siyá:m (which can be translated as a “wealthy and respected leader”).<sup>61</sup> Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, Dennis S. Peters’ great-grandson explains that Siya:mia is an important name, a leader’s name, and that the first Siya:mia was from I:yem and actually lived in one of the pit houses there.<sup>62</sup> Siya:mia was also the name of Adeline Lorenzetto’s paternal great-grandfather from Hope, a man known for his humility.<sup>63</sup> The name was, therefore, in the words of Mrs. Lorenzetto, “wanted by all in family,” and she emphasized that Dennis Peters only got it after an argument. She explained that although her father, Pierre Ayessick, said it would be “okay if the other got it,” outsiders insisted on calling Ayessick by the name Siya:mia, and that the name “didn’t stick with Peters.”<sup>64</sup>

Even though Dennis S. Peters clearly had extensive knowledge of the land question, one ponders how much a man whose fishing spot and name were disputed can be seen as representing and speaking with authority for the people of the Fraser Valley and Canyon. However, the contestation over Dennis S. Peters’ right to the name Siya:mia is in many ways a reflection of Mrs. Lorenzetto's own claim of status and importance, wherein she is saying that her immediate family is better than that of Dennis S. Peters.<sup>65</sup> As anthropologist Wayne Suttles

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<sup>61</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto, Wilson Duff Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook #5 September 1950, Royal British Columbia Museum, (copies at SNA).

<sup>62</sup> McHalsie, “We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us,” p. 92; As Adeline Lorenzetto explained to Wilson Duff “the first man to have that name was back before father’s grandfather, in a war with Thompson, a boy and mother survived, father killed. She sent him out to train, so he became big. She called him, Siya:mia.” Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto, Wilson Duff Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook #5 September 1950.

<sup>63</sup> Wilson Duff viewed Adeline Lorenzetto as “a good informant on some subjects, especially attitudes of people of high rank.” As Duff explains, “Her father had come from what had been regarded as the highest ranking family of the Hope area. Her mother was from a high ranking Langley family,” and as a result Mrs. Lorenzetto was “very conscious of her high rank.” Adeline Lorenzetto was interviewed with her husband, Edmund Lorenzetto. Duff explained that “although the youngest of my principal informants, Edmund has always taken a deep interest in the old culture, and he proved to be my best source of information on the Teit.” As the Lorenzettos were interviewed together it can be difficult to determine whose voice Duff is recording, although at times it is made explicit. See, Duff, *The Upper Stalo*, p. 9.

<sup>64</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto, Wilson Duff Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook #5 September 1950.

<sup>65</sup> Whereas Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto were critical of Peters’ adoption of the name Siya:mia, Dennis S.

has convincingly shown, people described their ancestors in a way that accentuates their own status and prominence, often at the expense of others, including those within their own extended families.<sup>66</sup> It should also be noted that although there was some conflict between the Lorenzettos and Dennis S. Peters over the name Siya:mia, they often worked together towards their common interests of advocating the land question and maintaining relationships with particular places such as I:yem, emphasizing how important these particular issues were to the Stó:lō as a group.<sup>67</sup>

The I:yem Memorial, in its declaration of a particular Aboriginal identity, was not only created for outsiders, as it was also meant to serve an internal purpose for those to whom it referred as Stó:lō. The memorial was part of an “ancient Stó:lō cemetery,” and adjacent to several prominent fishing spots; significantly, the Stó:lō people themselves would have used the highway at this time in order to access their canyon places. Paul Tennant has noted that the term Aboriginal distinguishes people already established in a place from those who came later as colonists.<sup>68</sup> Along these lines, the specific use of the term Stó:lō on the memorial in addition to not acknowledging colonial interactions refers to relationships amongst Aboriginal people themselves. It is the nature of monuments to express the ideals and perspective of those who create them often while

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Peters and his descendants clearly viewed the name as his and continuously emphasized his role as a political leader, referring to him as the “brains of Katz,” even though Pierre Ayessick was the chief. Dennis S. Peters, even used the name Siya:mia in his last will and testament. See LAC, RG10, file 987/37-2-35-X4, Individual Case Files—Estates—Dennis Peters—Hope Band—Fraser District, 1942-1965; Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, Interview by Amanda Fehr, digital recording, Hope, B.C., 24 June 2007, Copies of interview available through SNA; Carlson, “Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory,” p. 49.

<sup>66</sup> See Wayne Suttles, “Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Class Among the Coast Salish,” in *Coast Salish Essays*, ed. Wayne Suttles (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987).

<sup>67</sup> See for example, Testimony of Dennis S. Peters on behalf of Chief Pierre, Edward Lorenzetto and others.

<sup>68</sup> Paul Tennant, “Aboriginal Peoples and Aboriginal Title in British Columbia Politics,” in *Politics, Policy, and Government in British Columbia*, ed. R. K. Carty (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), p. 45, as quoted in Tim Schouls, *Shifting Boundaries: Aboriginal Identity, Pluralist Theory and the Politics of Self Government*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), p. 51.

obscuring “competing claims for authority and meaning.”<sup>69</sup> In this manner, while conflict and tension clearly existed within the communities of the Fraser Valley and Canyon, the creators of the memorial at I:yem promoted a particular Stó:lō identity. The continued existence of disputes does not negate the role of cooperation in the creation of the memorial and emphasis that it placed on shared beliefs amongst the Stó:lō, notably ancestors, fish and connections to the canyon in addition to common political concerns and goals for the future.

Beyond family and interfamilial tensions and conflicts *over to whom specific territories belonged*, there appears to have been increasing concerns over *who belonged to these canyon places* around the time that the memorial was erected. Those who no longer lived near the Fraser Canyon emphasized issues of belonging to particular places, and it is possible that overtime some tensions developed between those who left the canon and those who stayed. As the Lorenzettos explained, “Patrick [Charlie’s] father [Captain Charlie] and others from Yale moved to Ruby Creek. They still belong to Yale but Peter Emery is trying to get them out.”<sup>70</sup> It is significant that the Emory family was one that had stayed at Yale, just as the issue of Patrick Charlie’s father and others still belonging there was raised by people whose own families no longer lived there.<sup>71</sup> The significance of these shifts was not only in growing tensions over access to fishing spots, but notably about the increasing need to preserve particular relationships with the Fraser Canyon by which individuals could actually be considered to be a part of the places themselves.

More than articulating relationships with the federal and provincial governments or

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<sup>69</sup> Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin, “Introduction” in *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2003), p. 7.

<sup>70</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto, Wilson Duff, Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook #5, 1950.

<sup>71</sup> It should be noted that in 1914, the population of the Yale Band was only 27. Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon,” p. 150.

between and within Aboriginal groups, the I:yem Memorial served to maintain meaningful relationships between the Stó:lō and their canyon places—such as I:yem. Place is experienced and it is lived in. In essence, those who no longer lived near the canyon itself required a physical representation of themselves there to preserve their attachment with their canyon places. As a result the I:yem Memorial was created to physically exist within the canyon and become a part of it, acknowledging the rights of the Stó:lō while ensuring that they would continue to belong to the place where their ancestors once lived. In this way, belonging is about continuity and is as much internal as it is external. The Stó:lō did not only use the memorial to assert their continuing physical connection with I:yem in response to those who challenged their connections there, but also for themselves.

Although identified as one of the individuals directly responsible for the creation of the memorial, and by all accounts a prominent and well respected man, there is significantly less information about Isaac James than Dennis S. Peters. Like Peters, Chief Isaac James of the Yale Reserve at Ruby Creek, was involved in politics,<sup>72</sup> and had personal connections to, and rights to fish at, I:yem; however, the two men also differed in several ways. According to Fred Ewen from Seabird Island, Isaac James was originally from the Nlaka'pamux village of Spuzzum, “belonged to the half mile [Yale Indian Reserve] along Ruby Creek,” and was “always up at Yale.”<sup>73</sup> He only had one eye, and worked on the railroad for many years.<sup>74</sup> In this way Isaac James seems to have had more upriver connections with the Stó:lō's Nlaka'pamux neighbours than Dennis S. Peters, whose family was from the Hope area down river from Yale, and who himself resided on

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<sup>72</sup> Alice Marwood, Stó:lō Nation Genealogist.

<sup>73</sup> Fred Ewen, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (July 1945), 268: 2 (5).

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

the Chowéthel Reserve.<sup>75</sup> Where individuals spend the majority of their time clearly seems to center their broader understandings of place. Although both men were involved in creating the I:yem Memorial, their relationships to the canyon and understandings of I:yem were not the same.

Similarly, these two men had differing social roles among their contemporaries. Those who had disputes with Dennis S. Peters seem to have felt nothing but respect for Isaac James. Even Mrs. Vincent Peters described Isaac James as a siyá:m, noting that he even dressed differently.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, the memorial at I:yem may have been more thoroughly supported because of Isaac James' involvement than had Dennis S. Peters worked alone. While Peters had important knowledge of the land question, Isaac James was a siyá:m and elected chief under the Indian Act who had state-sponsored authority to speak for his community. In some ways their partnership is similar to that between Dennis S. Peters and Pierre Ayessick, where the higher status of the one added legitimacy to the knowledge and work of the other.

Anyone who had hereditary rights to canyon fishing sites was regarded as a member of the elite class. Therefore, it is important to consider the role of status in shaping Peters', James', and the others' understandings of their canyon places.<sup>77</sup> Duff has noted, and it is worth repeating here, “despite expected humility and mock denial of status there was never any doubt in anyone's mind that high rank people were superior individuals.” This was a society where “children were taught who social equals were and who inferiors were.”<sup>78</sup> Among the Stó:lō,

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<sup>75</sup> See David M. Schaepe, Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, Keith Thor Carlson, “Changing Households, Changing Houses,” in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 43.

<sup>76</sup> Mrs. Vincent Peters, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (summer 1945), 268: 4 (13).

<sup>77</sup> Once again, there are hints that gender also shaped how these individuals (who were predominantly male) understood I:yem.

<sup>78</sup> Duff, *The Upper Stalo*, p. 80.

people of high status (Smela:lh or “worthy”) are recognized to this day as those who know their history, whereas lower status people (S’texem or “worthless”) are discussed as those that have lost or forgotten it.<sup>79</sup> Through knowing one’s history and genealogy it was possible to gain access and ownership rights to particular fishing spots, such as those at I:yem. Special class-based hereditary knowledge was essential in navigating the Stó:lō world, as it determined people’s relationships with others as well as those with certain places. Similarly, the creators of the I:yem Memorial used genealogical and historical knowledge to demonstrate connections between the Stó:lō as a group and their ancestors buried in the canyon, thereby establishing their rights to the fishery there. This memorial reflects the status of its creators, while at the same time publicly displaying aspects of a communal history and rights proclaims the high status of the Stó:lō as a group, or at least those who it represented.

In addition to being a high-class siyám and elected chief, Isaac James was also believed to have special powers. Though Isaac James reportedly would not say what they were, Patrick Charlie, who himself claimed to be spiritually powerful,<sup>80</sup> knew that his brother-in-law had power by the way that he acted.<sup>81</sup> The fact that others may have perceived James to have special

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<sup>79</sup> Carlson, “Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory,” pp. 48-49; see also Wayne Suttles, “Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Class Among the Coast Salish,” in *Coast Salish Essays*, ed. Wayne Suttles, (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), p. 501.

<sup>80</sup> According to Wilson Duff, Patrick Charlie had a “strange reputation among the Indians –who were not sure whether to regard him as a man who retains memories from a past life or as a little funny in the head... The old people had been impressed but PC’s generation expresses some skepticism.” It is also worth noting that Patrick Charlie was also pragmatic, he made his “living working for the railroads, working on the construction of the CNR, and also as a labourer for the CPR.” See Duff, *The Upper Stalo*, p. 9; Irene Bjerky, “Annie Chapman Charlie 1883-1967, First Peoples of Yale and Spuzzum,” *Colourful Characters in Historic Yale*, <[http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/pm.php?id=story\\_line&fl=0&lg=English&ex=00000150&sl=5044&pos=15](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/pm.php?id=story_line&fl=0&lg=English&ex=00000150&sl=5044&pos=15)> (15 June 2008).

<sup>81</sup> Patrick Charlie even provided Wilson Duff with an example of Isaac James foreseeing what would happen in the future, explaining that James had predicted how younger people would alter a church plan that the two men had made together. Although it is easy to be skeptical of powers used to predict young people changing the plans for a church by two older gentlemen, Patrick Charlie seems to speak of this power as something that he at least accepted. Patrick Charlie, Wilson Duff, Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook #1. 1950.

powers or abilities would have potentially affected how they interacted with him, and in turn how he perceived the world around him. It is worth noting that Isaac James potentially related to the canyon and I:yem through such powers, as well as through his work on the railroad, his fishing spot there, and his family connections to places where his ancestors were located and that he helped to look after.

The memorial at I:yem was not only about the land question or the Native fishery, it was also about the ancestors buried in the canyon cemeteries. It was Isaac James who, according to Fred Ewen had a reputation for looking after these burial grounds.<sup>82</sup> James' participation in erecting the I:yem Memorial can therefore be seen as continuous with this work, as in many ways the placing of the monument was a form of looking after a cemetery where both he and Dennis S. Peters likely had relatives interred.

In 1938 I:yem was as much a place for the dead as it was for the living. The memorial served to protect the places of those who were buried in the Fraser Canyon and can be seen as an innovative means to maintain their places in a time of change. Five other villages (and associated cemeteries) were/are located at Yale or Xwoxwelá:lph, Xelhálh, Q'aleliktel, Aseláw, and Lexwts'okwám.<sup>83</sup> In some ways there are a lot of commonalities between these sites as all were used both prior to and after contact, and there is evidence of such associated changes. This is most notable in the cemeteries themselves, many of which are historic in nature and were clearly influenced by the presence of the Catholic Church in the region. A continuity of burials in these places exists between the ancient cemeteries and the more recent marked with crosses, as these historic cemeteries are located in the same place or near older burial grounds. Essentially Stó:lō

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<sup>82</sup> Fred Ewen, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (July 1945), 268: 2 (5).

<sup>83</sup> McHalsie, "We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us," p. 92.



people continued to live and be buried in these villages until the point that they no longer resided in the canyon in the late nineteenth century.<sup>84</sup> Still, some people who were born in these areas continued to be brought back and buried in these cemeteries years after they had left the canyon and the various villages had been abandoned.<sup>85</sup> For example, according to Isaac James, the graveyard at I:yem did not fill up until the early 1940s,<sup>86</sup> not long after the erection of the memorial there. Of course, it is worth noting that these villages and the canyon were people's homes. This idea of home emphasizes particular and personal relationships with the landscape and between the people living there. These personal relationships with the landscape continued after death, as these places were, over time, transformed into villages for the dead rather than the living.

These villages for the dead were subject to colonial threats that could damage the links between the living and their ancestors that remained in the canyon. Discussing burials at Spuzzum, anthropologist Andrea Laforet, in collaboration with Nlaka'pamux elder Annie York, emphasizes that "graves anchored people in death" to their places as "the fishing sites had in life," and that disruptions to cemeteries with the creation of the railroads and the highway, "had the effect of bulldozing away the tangible historical connection between Nlaka'pamux families and their communities."<sup>87</sup> This metaphor can also be applied to I:yem where cemeteries were disturbed by colonial acts, undoubtedly impacting the links between the Stó:lō, many who had moved down

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid; see also, Carlson, "Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon"; It seems that there were some people who still lived in the Canyon, and at I:yem, in the early twentieth century. Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto explained that the place where Edmund had his net near I:yem "belonged to Re'palE'lux a man who lived at I:yem most of the time. Had a Skemel [sqémél, pit house] and a split cedar house there." Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto, Wilson Duff, Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook # 5.

<sup>85</sup> Patrick Charlie explained that they "always brought a person home to home village when died." See Patrick Charlie, Wilson Duff, Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook # 1.

<sup>86</sup> Information from Isaac James, in Wilson Duff, Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook #1, Summer of 1950. There are also iron crosses at Xuthlath from the 1920s at least a generation after people relocated from that settlement. See, McHalsie, Interview, 24 June 2007.

<sup>87</sup> Andrea Laforet and Annie York, *Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories, 1808- 1939* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), p. 145.

river, and their ancestors in the canyon. Sonny McHalsie, recently explained that the cemetery at I:yem contained three or four large box graves moved from earlier burial sites that were disturbed when the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) cut through the region in the early 1880s.<sup>88</sup> This image provides a striking example of colonial acts that literally disrupted Stó:lō places, affecting not only the living but also the dead and their relationships with each other. The continued existence of the ancestors in their canyon resting places enabled those who had left the canyon to maintain important personal connections to it. As a result of destruction by the railway, ancestors were moved from places where they had lived to I:yem and in 1938 they were declared to be Stó:lō and honoured with a Christian cross. In this way, colonial changes to I:yem and the canyon also affected the identities of the dead, in addition to those of the living and their conception of the past.

While the white Christian cross could be viewed as a Stó:lō symbol, it would have been meaningful to most non-Natives at the time who would have respected the sacred space that it signified, providing an effective means for the Stó:lō to protect their ancestors and prevent further destruction to their places. It was essential that the living preserve aspects of their canyon places so that they would remain familiar to the dead. The dead were not restricted by the boundaries of their cemeteries, as they returned “to the places they visited during their life,” maintaining

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<sup>88</sup> McHalsie, Interview, 24 June 2007; This is further supported by government correspondence over the destruction of a cemetery belonging to the Yale Indians by the CPR, which necessitated the movement of the bodies to a different location. Similarly, Mr and Mrs. Lorenzetto explained that at I:yem and Aseláw, they “took all the bones from big boxes and buried each in one place,” and that “some carved pictures on box,” confirming that some sort of movement of the deceased occurred at I:yem, although not necessarily that it was affiliated with the railway, and implying the care that was taken. Bob Joe further described the proper protocols for moving the dead, explaining “when old boxes would begin to disintegrate placed old box pieces in new, bones and dust put in new box. Older men do this work, without small children. No scratches on hands. Bodies within boxes occasionally rewrapped.” He emphasized that everyone who was related, “by blood or marriage to family of box was expected to be present.” See, LAC, vol. 3604, file 2325, “Kamloops Agency- Correspondence Regarding Damage Done to a Church on the Spuzzum Reserve and to an Indian Burial Ground by the Canadian Pacific Railroad”; Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto, Wilson Duff Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook # 5, 12 September 1950; Bob Joe Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (summer 1945), 268:5:5:31.

connections to, and existing within, the landscape even in the face of significant alterations to it.<sup>89</sup> The continued existence of the dead in their places is evident in the Stó:lō practice of ritualized burnings, or feasts for the dead, where food is literally burned to feed the spirits of the deceased. In 1945, Mary Charles explained that they cleaned the gravesites once a year and that a dinner, or cemetery burning feast, typically accompanied this cleaning. Anyone who had people buried at a place could give such a feast.<sup>90</sup> However, by the 1930s there were fewer people in the canyon participating in these cemetery cleanings and associated feasts.<sup>91</sup> The importance of living relatives continuing acts of honouring and caring for the dead, would have contributed to how Dennis Peters and Isaac James, understood and related to I:yem in 1938.<sup>92</sup> It was through places such as I:yem that relationships between the dead and the living were maintained. The act of the dedication of the I:yem Memorial fits within the context of cleaning and looking after a cemetery, while providing a potentially timely reminder to the Stó:lō people of their responsibilities to their ancestors buried in the canyon.

Even while honouring the ancestors and looking after their cemeteries, there were important rules for dealing with the dead that had to be followed, or the living could be endangered. Death, like life, was filled with regulations and protocols. Burnings were held to honour the ancestors, but also to protect the living; as Mary Charles noted, if they “didn’t burn

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<sup>89</sup> Bob Joe, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (summer 1945), 268:5:5:30 (830). He later elaborates, “they [the dead] did this indefinitely, no time when they ceased to be active. They traveled at dawn and at twilight.” Bob Joe, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (summer 1945), 5:5:31.

<sup>90</sup> Mary Charles, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (summer 1945), MS 268(4) no.1; Edmund Lorenzetto explained that although the living participants were usually relatives of the deceased, the ghosts included “some strangers as well,” and that some would even go down to Yale, from the Canyon, if there was a feast. See, Duff, *The Upper Stalo*, p. 117.

<sup>91</sup> Annie York, as quoted in Laforet, et al, *Spuzzum*, p. 150.

<sup>92</sup> Both men had familial connections to I:yem, and by association, those who were buried there. There is also evidence that their brother-in-law Patrick Charlie cleaned and looked after the cemetery at I:yem where his mother’s family had connections. Patrick Charlie’s Journal, p. 19.

grub,” the spirits might “come and take one of the family,” and that person would become ill.<sup>93</sup>

Knowledge of proper protocols was essential for people to safely navigate these places, and would have informed how people related to them. Part of Stó:lō understandings of places included knowledge of their potential hazards. The canyon was a place of potentially dangerous spirits and transformations. Even the word I:yem (meaning strength) could also imply danger. As Fred Ewen explained in his discussion of a person with strength (or Skeiyiyim) it was “not just that you respect him, but you respect him because you are afraid... he might hurt you, so you are afraid of him, polite to him... but in your mind you are afraid of him.”<sup>94</sup> It is reasonable to apply such attitudes towards a person with strength to I:yem, a place of strength. The nature of the rocky canyon warranted respect and a certain amount of fear. Sharp rocks and a swift flowing river could be dangerous, and likely were the cause of death of several of those people buried in the canyon. Particular knowledge was essential to people’s understandings of I:yem, both in terms of being respectful and for their own safety.

Finally, we return to the dedication of the I:yem Memorial on Sunday August 14<sup>th</sup> 1938. Riddled with hybridity and representing the interests of individuals and groups, this event combined Christian symbols with a format similar to a potlatch to mark I:yem as a Stó:lō place. Like a potlatch, a public ceremony where names and associated rights to resources are passed on,<sup>95</sup> the dedication of the memorial provided the means for the Stó:lō to publicly assert their

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<sup>93</sup> Mary Charles, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (11 July 1945), 268:4, p. 45; There were protocols regarding the dead that had to be followed to avoid endangering the living. For example children were not allowed to be outside at dusk. See, Bob Joe, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (summer 1945), 5:5:31.

<sup>94</sup> Fred Ewen, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (24 August 1945), MS 268:2 (15).

<sup>95</sup> Douglas Harris describes “the Potlatch and feast as repositioning legal authority in many Native societies,” explaining that it was where titles were recognized and resource entitlements confirmed. See Douglas C. Harris *Fish Law and Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 5.

right, and that of future generations, to fish in the five mile area above Yale. As has already been noted potlatches and even large meetings of Aboriginal people for political purposes were illegal at this time. In spite of this, at the dedication of the memorial, newspapers noted “the presence of a large gathering of the Indians from the various reserves of the Fraser Valley,” as well as a number of neighbouring friends among the white people.<sup>96</sup> The audience, which included people from a variety of communities, would have served as witnesses of the memorial’s dedication to ensure that the Stó:lō rights to the five mile Native fishery asserted there would not be contested in the future.<sup>97</sup> Outlining a family’s history, or the history of a name, would typically have been part of a potlatching ceremony. Notably, at the dedication of the I:yem Memorial speakers Dennis S. Peters<sup>98</sup> and Chief Harry Stewart<sup>99</sup> outlined the history of the Stó:lō tribes.<sup>100</sup> Finally, there was the significant gift of the memorial itself asserting a Stó:lō right to fish in their five mile fishery that they inherited from their ancestors.<sup>101</sup> Serving as a reminder of the relationship between those who lived and were buried in the canyon and their descendents living further down river, the memorial mobilized these relationships, drawing attention to downriver people’s

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<sup>96</sup> See “Indian Memorial is Blessed by Archbishop.”

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> It should be noted that the family that hosted the potlatch could not speak about themselves (in accordance with beliefs about status and humility), and would hire someone to speak for them. This relates to Dennis S. Peters’ particular role in creating the memorial at I:yem where in addition to representing himself, he was speaking on behalf of others with potentially more authority in their communities.

<sup>99</sup> In the context of tensions amongst the Stó:lō over fishing spots it is significant that Harry Stewart, who was the Chief at Chilliwack and has been depicted as “one of the greatest” siyá:ms noted for his for ability to settle disputes, and often called upon to do so by other groups, was a speaker. Indian Agent O. N. Daunt, in 1931, described Stewart as a “powerful man,” who “has great control over the Indians. He is sober and hardworking...” On the other hand, Daunt was also quite concerned about Stewart’s use of such control and tendency to “infringe on the rights of the other Indians.” See, Bruce Miller, *The Problem of Justice: Tradition and Law in the Coast Salish World* (Lincoln Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), p. 150; LAC, RG10, vol. 7128, file 987/3-5 pt. 2, Letter to the Secretary, Department of Indian affairs Ottawa, from O. N. Daunt, New Westminster B.C., 6 May 1931.

<sup>100</sup> See “Stallo Tribe Erects Cross to Ancestors.” It is likely this history would have included information about Stó:lō connections to the canyon and their ancestors there that would have been essential in establishing hereditary rights.

<sup>101</sup> Picture of the I:yem Memorial, SNA.

claims to the fishery. Although arguably there was little conflict between the use of a Christian cross and a proclamation of Stó:lō identity to the people at the time, the dedication demonstrates how completely the memorial was in keeping with Aboriginal customs, with speakers and witnesses, the history of the Stó:lō Tribes, and an articulation of their rights. This would have also been an appropriate time for such a ceremony, as the witnesses of the last potlatches of the late nineteenth century were dying.<sup>102</sup> It was a time when those with increasing downriver roots needed to publicly assert their rights in order to maintain their connections, and those of their descendants, with the canyon fishery.

The role of the I:yem Memorial in publicly passing on Stó:lō rights to fish in the Fraser Canyon is supported by Bob Joe's description of the creation of the memorial and Patrick Charlie's knowledge of Siya:mia. According to Bob Joe, the reason for erecting the memorial was so that "the fishing grounds can be used by all the tribes from Musqueam up, up to Saddle Rock [Five Mile Creek or Lexwts'okwám]. They were allowed it. That's the agreement. 'Cause they spoke almost the same dialect at that time."<sup>103</sup> This emphasizes that one of the original purpose of the I:yem Memorial was to give or rearticulate the right to fish in the Fraser Canyon to all the Stó:lō people. The idea that the monument rearticulated existing rights, or passed them on to the next generation, is suggested by Dennis Peters' name Siya:mia. As Patrick Charlie

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<sup>102</sup> Patrick Charlie noted that, "the only witness we have to the land of Patrick Charlie living today is Chief Harry Joseph of Sea Bird Island." *Journal of Patrick Charlie*, August 1953, p. 29; Carlson has noted the significance of the large potlatch that occurred around 1890 where Captain Charlie passed his name Súx'yel "and associated fishing rights to lower Fraser Canyon fishing site at Aseláw to his youngest son Patrick Charlie." Carlson, "Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon," p. 149.

<sup>103</sup> Bob Joe, Oliver Wells, February 8, 1962. p.104; It should be noted that Bob Joe, as someone who continued to fish in the canyon at I:yem, was a beneficiary of this interpretation of the memorial. It is significant that Bob Joe identified Musqueam as the boundary of Stó:lō territory rather than Chilliwack as Dennis S. Peters had in his 1922 testimony. These changing definitions of Stó:lō boundaries potentially signify increased movement of Stó:lō people to the larger centers downriver over this forty year period, emphasizing how Stó:lō relationships with their places continued to change in the twenty years since the erection of the memorial.

explained to Wilson Duff:

A fishing spot at this place [I:yem] was owned by SiN'miya [Siya:mia], an important and prolific man of three generations ago. Through him, a large number of people now have the right to fish here.”

This could suggest that the agreement that Bob Joe referred to was made by the first Siya:mia rather than Dennis S. Peters (who was the third or fourth person to carry that name).<sup>104</sup> With hereditary names, and the associated links between carriers, it would not necessarily have mattered which one initially provided rights to I:yem or was a prolific man.<sup>105</sup> Still, due to the aforementioned changes to the canyon and population migrations, by 1938 it was likely necessary to rearticulate the rights of downriver people to fish in the Fraser Canyon for current and future generations. Nonetheless, agreements associated with the name Siya:mia provide a context for the dedication of the memorial at I:yem and the continuity of Siya:mia's specific role in it.

This exploration of how some Stó:lō people understood I:yem in 1938, the context in which the memorial was erected there, and the individual and group motivations for its creation, highlight the varied interpretations of I:yem, the memorial, and the rationales of those involved that at times seem to compliment and at others contradict one another. Essentially the I:yem Memorial made a statement to the federal and provincial governments, promoted a shared Stó:lō identity, attempted to smooth over rifts and conflicts between the Stó:lō themselves, and re-establish a personal connection between the Stó:lō people and the Fraser Canyon where their ancestors were buried and they themselves belonged. In addition to concerns of the Stó:lō as a

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<sup>104</sup> Wilson Duff, Unpublished MA Thesis, p. 50 as quoted in Pandur.

<sup>105</sup> For a discussion of the intergenerational meaning of names and associated acts see, Keith Thor Carlson, “Rethinking Dialogue and History: The King's Promise and the 1906 Aboriginal Delegation to London,” *Native Studies Review*, Vol. 16, 2 (2005): pp.1-38.

group, the memorial reflected personal and familial motivations of its principal creators, brothers-in-law Dennis S. Peters and Isaac James. While their personal and group motivations often overlapped and complimented one another, there were times when they were contradictory. This memorial was created because Dennis S. Peters, Isaac James and several others identified themselves as Stó:lō and were influenced by values associated with belonging to that group. Their proclamation in turn served to strengthen and solidify what it meant to be Stó:lō at that time, innovatively stating those elements of Stó:lō relationships with the Fraser Canyon that were fundamentally non-negotiable. In 1938 the Stó:lō people had many relationships with, and understandings of I:yem. It was a place where ancestors were buried and continued to exist; a part of the five mile Native fishery where some people continued to wind dry salmon; it was a contested place, both between the Stó:lō and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans as well as among certain families themselves; it was a place that had the potential to be dangerous and had to be navigated by specific forms of knowledge; it was a spiritual place marked by both a Christian cross and where food was burned for ancestors, it was a political place where leaders, who were at times connected to broader political movements, met to discuss the land question; it was a place where gender and class were significant and some people had more authority to speak than others; a social place where families came together; and fundamentally a place of change. In many ways reacting against the effects of colonial and resulting internal challenges, the I:yem Memorial, itself an example of hybridity, defines a distinctly Stó:lō place, emphasizing what aspects of this place the Stó:lō themselves viewed as non-negotiable. In this way, the importance of the ancestors, fishery and belonging to particular canyon places such as I:yem has continuously been emphasized. Ironically such an act of preservation in itself resulted in certain changes. In 1938 the creators of the I:yem Memorial critiqued their present and recent past based



on their understandings of what had been before and their goals for the future, which included ancestors, fishing, and maintaining their relationships with their places in the Fraser Canyon. How successful they were is the subject of the next chapter.

### CHAPTER THREE: I:YEM REMEMBERED

“Our history and our own personal connections to the land are out there waiting for each of us.” -Albert (Sonny) McHalsie<sup>1</sup>

“It’s always been there. It will surface every once and a while.”  
-Stó:lō Grand Chief Archie Charles, on the current treaty process, 2003<sup>2</sup>

Although the memorial erected by Dennis S. Peters and Isaac James in 1938 remains at I:yem, it has changed over the past seventy years—both in terms of its appearance and the ways in which the people of the Fraser Valley and Canyon relate to and understand it. The physical changes to the site were noticed by Stó:lō elder Mabel Nichols when she described the “white picket fence no longer white, two small grey crosses with nothing written on them, and the larger one with the gaping spot where the plaque had been.”<sup>3</sup> A casual visitor might infer that the memorial has been forgotten; yet, as the quotes above emphasize, aspects of Stó:lō history, personal connections to the land, and political claims exist in Stó:lō places. Similarly, the memorial at I:yem surfaces every so often in a process of repatriation and reinterpretation. As in the past, understandings of the memorial continue to be shaped in large part by people’s visions for their future. These result in the mobilization of various meanings for the I:yem Memorial in different situations – some of which correspond while others seem to contradict one another. Such goals for the future are shaped by an ongoing assessment of the past.<sup>4</sup> In this way, the intentions of the memorials’ creators (informed by their own experienced present and recent history) have now become aspects of the past to be interpreted by Stó:lō people today. These

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<sup>1</sup> Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, “Halq’emélem Place Names in Stó:lō Territory,” in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, ed. Keith Thor Carlson, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2001), p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Archie Charles, Interview with Byron Plant, Seabird Island, 3 June 2002, as quoted in Byron Plant, “‘In Principle’: Stó:lō Political Organizations and Attitudes Towards Treaty Since 1969,” (University of Saskatchewan/University of Victoria Stó:lō Ethnohistory Fieldschool, 2002), Stó:lō Nation Archives [SNA], p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Mabel Nichols, Personal Communication, 6 October 2007.

<sup>4</sup> This is essentially the idea of historical consciousness.

contemporary interpretations of the I:yem Memorial alternately emphasize either the need to re-establish and maintain personal connections to canyon places, or the memorials' potential role in resolving an ongoing conflict between the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Counsel on the one side and the Yale First Nation on the other over both territory and questions of identity. These political and personal relationships are never entirely separate, as is apparent in the continuing role of the I:yem Memorial as a focal point of Stó:lō identity and interpretations of place. Although I:yem is no longer the strong or lucky place that it once was, it remains significant to many Aboriginal people. This testifies to the strength of the relationships people have developed with I:yem, the lasting importance of the ancestors buried there, and the centrality of the five mile Native fishery to people's economic and social wellbeing.



**Figure 3.1 I:yem Memorial in 2008, photo courtesy of Mabel Nichols**

This chapter explores how some people of the Fraser Valley and Canyon reinterpret both I:yem and its memorial by continuing to examine the themes of personal connections to place, memory, ancestors, fishing, non-negotiability, authority, ownership and politics—themes that relate to and often inform one another, and are intertwined with interpretations of the past, filtered through the present, with an eye to the future. Dealing with both personal and political as well as individual and community experiences of place, this investigation incorporates a non-reductionist approach in its discussion of the abovementioned themes and their roles in shaping understandings of place. This discussion is primarily based on oral interviews that I conducted during the joint University of Victoria/University of Saskatchewan Stó:lō Ethnohistory Fieldschool in June 2007, but also incorporates earlier interviews from the Stó:lō Nation Archive's Oral History Collection, court records, political agreements, and newspaper articles to access the perspective of the Yale First Nation. While emphasising that individual and community understandings of place cannot be completely separated from one another, this analysis begins with some individual interpretations of I:yem before turning to the collective relationships that both the Stó:lō and Yale have with each other and the canyon places they view as their own.

While the meaning ascribed to I:yem remains dynamic and alive, one thing that became apparent in conversations I had with local Native people was the issue of forgetting. In a variety of settings, different people regularly emphasized the need to regain and preserve memories of the Fraser Canyon. In fact, since some Elders did not know the memorial by name, it sometimes took a fair amount of explaining before people understood which place I was interested in learning about. For example, when I asked Tillie Gutierrez and Archie Charles about the I:yem Memorial, both Stó:lō elders brought up a more recent monument of a salmon carved into a rock

by some Stó:lō people to memorialize 23-year-old murder victim Melanie Carpenter who's body was found near I:yem in 1998. Their clear memory of the murdered girl was in stark contrast to those Aboriginal ancestors forgotten in the cemetery at I:yem.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Dennis S. Peters' great-grandson Naxaxalhts'i (Sonny McHalsie)<sup>6</sup> suggested that I:yem was already being forgotten in 1938, and that the memorial, and more significantly the plaque, were created to preserve its memory and history.

In the context of current inter-tribal political conflicts, it is the memorial's text that is of particular significance. Grand Chief, Judge (and current Lieutenant Governor of B.C.) Steven Point, emphasized the political and economic significance of "rediscovering" the memorial through people's "own lens," as it provided important evidence for the Stó:lō in their ongoing disputes with the Yale First Nation over territory.<sup>7</sup> Further emphasizing the importance of the text, self-described "fisher-lady" and Stó:lō elder, Rita Pete,<sup>8</sup> shared how upset she was when she discovered that the plaque had been stolen. It was the plaque, she explained, that provided the memorial with significance:

[W]hoever we bring up there, they wonder what it means. So we let them read it and then they go around reading the other ones. It [is] just important and now everybody knows that it's there and everybody wanted to know what it said. Now there's no plaque to read.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "3,000 Mourn Slain B.C. Woman, Many at Carpenter Service Vow to Fight for Tougher Laws," *The Globe and Mail*, 4 February 1998, A1; Matilda (Tillie) Gutierrez, Interview by Amanda Fehr and Amber Kostuchenko, Digitally recorded, Chawathil, 26 June 2007, Copies of interview available through SNA; Archie Charles, Interview by Amanda Fehr, Amber Kostuchenko and Katya MacDonald, Digitally recorded, Seabird Island, B.C., 28 June 2007, Copies of interview available through SNA.

<sup>6</sup> Dennis S. Peters was Sonny McHalsie's maternal great-grandfather. Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, Interview by Amanda Fehr, Digitally recorded, Hope, B.C., 24 June 2007, Copies of interview available through SNA.

<sup>7</sup> Steven Point, Interview by Andree Boiselle and Amanda Fehr, Digitally recorded, Chilliwack, B.C., 29 June 2007, Copies of interview available through SNA.

<sup>8</sup> Mrs Pete was born in 1935 and lives at Skam reserve. Her fishing spot is located at I:yem.

<sup>9</sup> Rita Pete, Interview by Amanda Fehr and Katya MacDonald, Digitally recorded, Skam reserve, B.C., 29 June 2007, Copies of interview available through SNA.

Mrs. Pete's discussion demonstrates how, in many ways, the plaque has become the memory of I:yem, and the signifier of its meaning. Building on Sonny McHalsie's suggestion that I:yem was already being forgotten in 1938, and that the memorial (and more significantly the plaque) were created to preserve its memory and history, these statements provide glimpses of how people have begun to reclaim the memorial and with that to re-assert their rights and claims to territory. In this way the memorial, while providing evidence of past relationships with I:yem, serves as a reminder of the need for the Aboriginal people of the Fraser Valley and Canyon to forge their own connections with I:yem.

Highlighting the role of personal knowledge and family connections in determining individuals' understandings of places, with the exception of Sonny McHalsie none of those interviewed for this project were able to comment on the history of the I:yem memorial itself. For Mr. McHalsie, the I:yem memorial foremost represents his family's connections to that particular location in the canyon and is therefore more than a mnemonic device. The memorial was built by his great-grandfather, at a site that McHalsie has essentially rediscovered or re-established for himself through conversations with his elders and during the course of his own place names research. In 1987 Mr. McHalsie began working with the Stó:lō and the Alliance of Tribal Councils recording heritage sites, place names, fishing grounds, and transformer rocks. That job eventually lead him to his current position as Director of the Stó:lō Nation Research and Resource Management Centre.<sup>10</sup> Although it was primarily through his late uncle Peter Dennis

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<sup>10</sup> Knowledge of places and their history continues to be essential in the pursuit of claims by the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council and has recently involved significant community directed research projects including the gathering of oral histories. For example, extensive oral interviews were conducted following 1985 when the Stó:lō "started a court case as a part of the Alliance of Tribal Councils." As Clarence Pennier explains, the Alliance of Tribal Councils was "successful in preventing the Canadian National Railway (CNR) from double tracking their railway, which would have destroyed habitat and fishing sites beside their railway. There is still an injunction in

Peters (Dennis S. Peters' grandson) that McHalsie came to know about the memorial, he is aware of potential bias in his sources, and as such applies a cautious reading to his interpretation of the plaque.<sup>11</sup> In this way, there appears to be some striking similarities between McHalsie and his great-grandfather Dennis S. Peters, notably in the way they apply their knowledge of Stó:lō places and history to maintain meaningful connections to those places. Nonetheless, one can detect a shift in McHalsie's interpretation of the memorial. For McHalsie, the memorial reveals the importance of re-establishing and maintaining personal connections with canyon places; for his grandfather, the significance seemed to be in articulating which aspects of those relationships are non-negotiable and in need of preservation.<sup>12</sup>

It is interesting to compare Sonny McHalsie's interpretation of the I:yem memorial with that of Stó:lō elder (and recognized tribal historian), Robert (Bob) Joe, forty years earlier. Bob Joe emphasised the link between the memorial and access to fishing spots in the area – likely the aspect of the message that affected him the most, as a downriver resident who continued to fish in the canyon. He does not mention the plaque itself or the words written on it, relying instead on his own memories of the events that took place in 1938.<sup>13</sup> In contrast Sonny McHalsie, born two decades after the memorial was erected, connects the memorial and I:yem with everything that is written on the plaque; Stó:lō identity, fishing grounds, ancient cemeteries, and the

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place, which prevents the CNR from double tracking until trial (which may never happen).” See Clarence Pennier, “Preamble,” Stó:lō History and Information, 1999, SNA.

<sup>11</sup> McHalsie emphasized that Peter Dennis Peters actually met Dennis S. Peters, but was careful to note that, “Peter Dennis Peters might be a biased point of view because it is his grandfather but I think Tillie Gutierrez described him the same way.” McHalsie, Interview, 24 June 2007; McHalsie, “We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to us,” in *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, ed. Bruce Granville Miller, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), pp. 82-83.

<sup>12</sup> Those aspects of I:yem that were viewed as non-negotiable in 1938 have certainly been remembered and maintained as everyone I spoke to was familiar with the significance of fishing and the cemeteries throughout the five-mile Native fishery.

<sup>13</sup> See, Bob Joe, “Bob Joe at Tzeachten February 8, 1962” in Oliver Wells Interview Collection (1961-1968), transcript, SNA, p. 103.

ancestors. Although Sonny McHalsie is more separated from the memorial by experience and time than Bob Joe, he clearly has developed a connection to that place. Mr. McHalsie stated that

[I] always wondered why it was so important for him [Dennis S. Peters] to put that [memorial] up there...[It was] not until I realized that his name [Siya:mia] comes from there and that is where his ancestors come from. So I think it was really important to him that that not be forgotten; that the younger people like myself and each generation don't forget our connection to that place.<sup>14</sup>

The need to remember the relationships between people and the places that they and their families come from is highlighted in this passage. There is meaning in subsequent generations returning to the places where their ancestors lived. As Mr. McHalsie explains, “these places -- I:yem and Aseláw -- were important to my ancestors and are now important to me and also to my future grandchildren and great grandchildren.”<sup>15</sup> In many ways, the emphasis that Sonny McHalsie places on the memorial as a device to remind Stó:lō of their connections to I:yem, suggests the strength of his own experience of regaining knowledge about that place, and the importance in his own life of re-establishing connections with his ancestors and maintaining them for future generations.

According to Sonny McHalsie, Dennis S. Peters and Isaac James “didn’t want us to forget about the burial grounds.”<sup>16</sup> It seems that those who continue to fish in the canyon, and still have some connection or relationship with these places, have not forgotten about the ancient cemeteries in the five mile Native fishery. In fact, Rita Pete, who has been fishing at I:yem with

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<sup>14</sup> McHalsie, Interview, 24 June 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> McHalsie, Interview, 24 June 2007.



her family for about sixty years, looks after the gravesite there.<sup>17</sup> Her family has been cleaning the cemetery at I:yem every year since they began fishing there, and before that they cared for a graveyard across the river at Aseláw where they had fished.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Rita Pete and her family have been continuing the practice of looking after the ancestors buried in the canyon with the significant exception that they do not know who any of the people are that are buried in the cemeteries. Rita Pete suggested that the ancestors were forgotten because they died so long ago, and that “nobody thinks of them or anything.”<sup>19</sup> Her connection with I:yem and the cemetery there is because it is next to her fishing spot rather than through connections to specific ancestors who are buried there.<sup>20</sup> Although those buried at I:yem (and their stories) have primarily been forgotten as individuals, they continue to be remembered as ancestors and treated with respect.

Beyond remembering those buried in the canyon, one of the original purposes of the memorial was to protect the Stó:lō cemeteries there during a time of change. Nonetheless, changes have occurred in the canyon, and specifically in the cemetery at I:yem where grave markers and most notably the memorial’s plaque are missing.<sup>21</sup> It therefore seems that the Christian cross of the I:yem Memorial no longer has the power to protect the location as a sacred space. This is not to imply that people were not upset about these changes and vandalism at I:yem. Rita Pete, for example was quite angry that the plaque had been stolen. However, her concern resulted from the

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<sup>17</sup> Rita Pete is still fishing at 73. Her father was Willie George (a signatory of Oscar Peters’ 1944 Petition in support of the Native Brotherhood) and her mother was Lillian. It was Mrs. Pete’s mother who had connections to I:yem. See, Rita Pete, Interview by Amanda Fehr and Katya MacDonald, Digitally recorded, Skam reserve, B.C., 29 June 2007, Copies of interview available through SNA; LAC, C-11-2 vol. 11299, Letter to Mr. G. Williams, Native Brotherhood of B.C., Vancouver B.C., from Oscar D. Peters, Katz B.C. With Attached Endorsements and Contentions Harrison, Yale and Chilliwack Valley Districts, 29 April 1944.

<sup>18</sup> Pete, Interview, 29 June 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Pete, Interview, 29 June 2007.

<sup>20</sup> However, due to the relationship between fishing spots and family connections it is likely Mrs. Pete has some connection albeit in a distant way to those buried at I:yem.

<sup>21</sup> Pete, Interview, 29 June 2007.

plaques' role in explaining the importance of I:yem, rather than because its loss signified the desecration of a sacred place. Regardless of these changes to I:yem, Mrs. Pete and her family continue to honour the dead and follow the proper protocols to maintain their places.

In addition to cleaning the cemetery, Rita Pete and her family have ritualistic burnings there for the ancestors;<sup>22</sup> they “feed the ancestors ‘cause they’ve been forgotten.” She explained,

the first year I had it up there I had Roger Andrews up there and he was telling me that there were old big boats and old wagons and even the Chinamen were there and a lot of the old ancestors that came for the food. That was something to hear. So I have it every year now. I was going to have it every other year but the people I got doing the job said you should do it every year.<sup>23</sup>

Mrs. Pete's explanation of the results of the first burning she had at I:yem highlight some the changes that occurred there, both in terms of how people relate to the space and who they were. The reference to the Chinese (who may have died while working on the railway in that area) suggests how with the creation of the railway and other events, different groups of people became connected to the changing landscape. Still, the presence of the old ancestors at the burning and at I:yem demonstrates that they continue to be a part of that place rather than simply an aspect of its history to be either remembered or forgotten. One wonders if Dennis S. Peters and Isaac James, are among the dead that continue to journey to I:yem for the feasts that Mrs. Pete holds for them. The burning of food for the dead at I:yem is another way that respect continues to be shown to the dead and beyond that a means for people to re-connect with their ancestors, their history, and their canyon places.

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<sup>22</sup> At burnings, food is burned for the ancestors, and messages are received from them.

<sup>23</sup> Pete, Interview, 29 June 2007.

This concept of having a connection to particular places and those who used them in the past is often emphasised, as is the sense that it has been lost and needs to be regained. The need for meaningful connection between the Stó:lō and the Fraser Canyon is outlined by Sonny McHalsie who reveals,

When I talk about I:yem as a place name that's an important place, it's a fishing place, it's a fishing ground. But when I start talking about Dennis S. Peters setting up the memorial I start talking about my grandfather fishing at that one place and that's my connection to the spot... That's the really important part of it. I think that is what's missing today... I think that the only people that have a really big connection up there is to the fishing rounds.<sup>24</sup>

Mr. McHalsie critiques the changing relationships between the Stó:lō and I:yem as it transformed from a village site, to a place where people returned to be buried, to sites where some people now fish. His statement captures the sense that it is through returning to an idealized version of the past, that regaining relationships with particular places is possible. The need to re-establish Stó:lō connections to the canyon is similar to the context in which Dennis S. Peters and Isaac James innovatively created the I:yem memorial in 1938. It seems that over the past seventy years the Stó:lō have continuously felt that their personal attachments to the Fraser Canyon have been threatened and have consciously needed to re-assert them to preserve what aspects of those relationships they have self-identified as most important.

But if knowledge of the canyon's history was regarded as sufficient to a previous generation to ensure the region's protection, the contemporary situation seems to require more. Today, maintaining an actual physical relationship with specific places is needed. Although Sonny McHalsie has familial connections to I:yem and is knowledgeable of the history of that

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<sup>24</sup> McHalsie, "We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us," p. 93.

place, he explains, “I don’t really have a personal connection to I:yem; it’s a place where I don’t go fishing. I know my grandfather fished just up river from I:yem, where Rita Pete fishes now.”<sup>25</sup> McHalsie draws attention to how experiences in the canyon determine peoples’ relationships with the region. So profound is the need to create meaningful attachments that Mr. McHalsie states he would like to be buried up there (thirty miles from his home reserve), and not only because of the connection that would create for him with his ancestors, but because “that would be a way to reconnect our young people to that place.”<sup>26</sup> Like his great-grandfather before him, Sonny McHalsie continues to worry that future generations will lose their connection to the canyon, and therefore searches for innovative means to prevent this from happening.

I:yem was a good place to catch salmon. According to Matilda (Tillie) Gutierrez whose grandparents fished at I:yem, “the reason why they all loved going up there is because the water is so rough and the fish is easy to catch because they used dip nets.”<sup>27</sup> She went on to explain, “I guess that’s what it really means, the memorial of that place there I:yem that fish was easy to get because the water is so rough.”<sup>28</sup> To Mrs. Gutierrez the significance of I:yem, and the memorial connected to it is directly linked to her own experiences.

Similarly, Archie Charles,<sup>29</sup> who continues to fish at his family’s fishing spot just upriver from I:yem, and slightly downriver from Five Mile Creek (Lexwts’okwám),<sup>30</sup> explained that it was the narrow canyon and rough water that made these places in the five mile fishery so good. Conversely, downriver from Yale, where the river is calmer and wider, the fish can just go up the

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<sup>25</sup> McHalsie, “We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us,” p. 92.

<sup>26</sup> McHalsie, Interview, 24 June 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Gutierrez, Interview, 26 June 2007.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Archie Charles is 86 years old and resides at Seabird Island. His fishing spot has been in his family for many years. See Charles, Interview, 28 June 2007.

<sup>30</sup> He did not refer to his fishing spot by its Aboriginal name.

middle and are more difficult to catch.<sup>31</sup> The landscape itself facilitated and often determined how people were able to use it; as a result, the environment itself is inseparable from the meaning ascribed to it. In addition to the traditionally important fishing rocks and eddies at I:yem, there were also holes “scoured out from the rocks by the erosion action of the river,” where people made *smotheqw*, or sockeye fish oil.<sup>32</sup>

I:yem, and the other fishing sites above Yale were an important component of the traditional fishing economy,<sup>33</sup> yet as described by Mrs. Gutierrez the value of the fishery clearly went beyond economics. People’s memories of fishing in the canyon demonstrate personal connections with the places themselves and the people with whom they share them. In this way the meaning of places are varied, relating directly to the experiences of the people who had them. To Tillie Gutierrez, I:yem is linked with memories of spending time drying fish with her grandmother, and pulling in a big spring salmon when she was thirteen or fourteen years old (to the delight of people fishing across the river who hollered at her). There is a definite sense of community created by the people from nearby fishing spots. I:yem was where she met her husband Allan Gutierrez, who was also fishing there with his grandparents, and a place where they fished together when they were first married.<sup>34</sup> Mrs. Gutierrez explained “I loved that area so much and today I still do, that’s why these place names stick right in my mind - all the heavenly places I grew up.”<sup>35</sup> Memories are intricately connected with personal meaning,

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<sup>31</sup> Mr. Charles and his family continue to dip net to catch fish because the fish do not get bruised. Charles, Interview, 28 June 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Brent Galloway and Coqualeetza Elders, Stó:lō Geographical Place Names File, Fieldtrip Two, August 1977. SNA, p. 38.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Gutierrez, Interview, 26 June 2007.

<sup>35</sup> Regina vs. Dorothy Vanderpeet, Proceedings at Trial, Canada in the Provincial Court of B.C. Before His Honour Judge E.D. Scarlett, (Surrey, B.C., 1 May 1989), file # 43322T, SNA, p.17.

experiences, and feelings. It is through these experiences and relationships that Mrs. Gutierrez remembers and interprets I:yem.

Clearly I:yem is more than an “easy” place to catch fish, as fishing (and therefore I:yem) is associated with other elements of Stó:lō culture. Tillie Gutierrez, explains that it was at I:yem that they<sup>36</sup> caught the salmon for the sacred First Salmon Ceremony, by lowering themselves down through a rocky arch that used to be there.<sup>37</sup> Sonny McHalsie believes that this is significant as through I:yem, and learning about that place, people have been able to re-learn elements about the First Salmon Ceremony that were nearly lost.<sup>38</sup> Along these lines, aspects of Stó:lō culture and history literally exist within certain places and the memories that they evoke. Memories and experiences are connected to places, and it is through returning to those places that they can be regained. Still, even though this ceremony is being regained, it has needed to adapt to changing circumstances. For example, Yale Elder Richard Hope, describing changes to the First Salmon Ceremony to Sonny McHalsie explained,

You cut it [the salmon] up and distribute it. Used to be you’d have a special dinner for that, invite everybody. People are so scattered now, families come from different reserves, now scattered out so much, you can’t just, every families got ten children, ten grandchildren, so you just give a piece to the elders mostly.<sup>39</sup>

Even in the process of regaining connections and continuing the First Salmon Ceremony there is a sense of lost connections to the fishery and associated ceremonies as families grow and change. Although elders maintain connections to these places through their continued participation in the

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<sup>36</sup> It is clear that here Mrs. Gutierrez is referring to her family at least.

<sup>37</sup> Gutierrez, Interview, 26 June 2007; McHalsie, Interview, 24 June 2007; McHalsie, “We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us,” p. 90.

<sup>38</sup> McHalsie, “We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us,” p. 90.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Hope, Interview with Sonny McHalsie, Richard Daly, Yale B.C., 1988. SNA Oral History Collection, HR1988, p. 18.

First Salmon Ceremony, their families do not necessarily have that opportunity. This hints not only at the changing relationships between people and particular places in the canyon through ceremonies, but also within families. In Stó:lō epistemology, these relationships between families, individuals, and the canyon are inseparable – or at least certain people feel that they should be. Hence the continued need for memorials like I:yem.

Part of the personal aspects of peoples' understandings of I:yem derived from familial and interpersonal relationships that were maintained and reinforced there. Mrs. Gutierrez's love of I:yem is partly derived from the place itself, but also from the time spent there with family members and others. She emphasized how their fishing area at I:yem was destroyed when the arch was blasted away: "when they put those fish ladders in there they blasted in trying to flatten the area."<sup>40</sup> The construction of concrete fish ladders by the International Salmon Commission in response to river blockages in the late 1950s showcases what are at times conflicting interests between band control over reserves and family connections to particular fishing places. Although the fishways were not to "interfere with the normal fishing habits of Indians at the site of the obstruction,"<sup>41</sup> their creation and the blasting involved in clearing out the river in the early 1960s (while preserving the salmon runs) caused the destruction of the fishing site that was used by Tillie Gutierrez's grandparents. Notably, in 1961, Yale Chief Peter Emery was advised that the International Salmon Commission wished to use a portion of Yale Indian Reserve 22 to set up an air compressor in connection with the proposed removal of twenty feet of two rocky pinnacles – the arch previously referred to by Mrs. Gutierrez. Because I:yem is on reserve land, the

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<sup>40</sup>Matilda Gutierrez, as quoted in McHalsie "We have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us," p. 90.

<sup>41</sup> LAC, RG10 vol. 13300, file 167/31-5-41-11, Fraser Agency File for Yale Reserve 22. "Description of Obstruction of Sockeye Salmon Migration near Yale on the Fraser River."

Commission required permission from the Yale Band to access the territory. Although Chief Emery had originally “shown considerable concern over the possibility of their excellent fishing pool at this point being ruined,”<sup>42</sup> a Band Council resolution was passed giving the International Pacific Salmon Commission free access to do their work.<sup>43</sup> As Tillie Gutierrez and her family were not members of the Yale Band they were not consulted regarding this matter, and as a result their fishing spot as they knew it was forever altered. Mrs. Gutierrez explained that I:yem

was a good fishing place for my grandfather until the railway and the highway came and they started blasting that place. Now there’s nobody who can do any fishing there anymore, so actually the only thing we own is the site but no more fishing ground; it’s all ruined.<sup>44</sup>

Specifically, this statement illustrates how Tillie Gutierrez viewed I:yem. To her, I:yem was her grandparents' fishing spot rather than a broader area including other fishing sites – such as where Mrs. Pete continues to fish. More generally, she highlights how people of her own generation view canyon places primarily as fishing grounds. To Mrs. Gutierrez, I:yem, as she knew it, was ruined by the destruction of their fishing spot. Accordingly, testifying before a judge in a fisheries case, she said, “there *used* to be a place there they called I:yem.”<sup>45</sup>

In stating that I:yem is no more, Mrs. Gutierrez raises interesting questions about place and memory, and how changes to places affect peoples’ memories of and connections to them. The I:yem that Tillie Gutierrez loved no longer exists. Her connections to that place are now

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<sup>42</sup> LAC, RG10 vol. 13300, file 167/31-5-41-11, To Mr. Lloyd A. Royal, Director International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission, New Westminster, B.C., from J.S. Dunn, Superintendent New Westminster Indian Agency, 26 January 1961, 153/31-5-33-22.

<sup>43</sup> LAC, RG10 vol. 13300, file 167/31-5-41-11, Band Council Resolution Yale Indian Band, New Westminster Indian Agency, 27 March 1961.

<sup>44</sup> Regina v. Dorothy Vanderpeet Proceedings at Trial, p. 17.

<sup>45</sup> Matilda Gutierrez, Interview with Sonny McHalsie and Randel Paul, 7 September 1989, SNA Oral History Collection GM 89-7, p. 30. Emphasis added.



primarily through her memories. The memorial too serves as a reminder of the way that I:yem was; however, rather than existing only in memory it exists in space and time.

Declining numbers of people returning to the canyon to dry fish demonstrates how relations with these places have changed even while people continue to fish in the spots of their ancestors. In the early 1950s, Wilson Duff noted that the “time tested Aboriginal technology of dip nets and drying salmon in the canyon, though still in limited use” were “rapidly giving way to gill nets and home canning.”<sup>46</sup> No doubt such transformations in human activities were partially due to changes to the landscape itself, as well as government regulations, and developments in transportation and technology. Rita Pete spoke of how she had seen the fishing fluctuate in the past sixty years and explained that “not that much of us dry fish these days.”<sup>47</sup> She attributed this to people passing away, and although she recognized that “some of the kids go up there yet,” she noted that, “some don’t bother.”<sup>48</sup> Although it might be more efficient and economical to home can salmon, something is potentially lost when families do not gather together over the course of several weeks to wind dry salmon. The story telling, the sharing of memories, and the significance of I:yem are the sorts of things that technological progress can obscure.

Fishing sites at I:yem continue to be contested, including the one near the cemetery where Dennis S. Peters had fished and where Rita Pete currently fishes with her family.

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<sup>46</sup> Duff, *The Upper Stalo Indians of Fraser Valley British Columbia*, Anthropology in British Columbia Memoir No. 1, (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1952), p. 13. Some changes to technology relate to the ownership of fishing stations and confusion or disputes over certain places. For example, ethnohistorian Keith Thor Carlson has noted that where as a hundred years ago it was commonly understood that Stó:lō fishing spots were their fishing rocks next to the eddies, today it is the eddies that are considered to belong to particular fishers and their families. See Keith Thor Carlson, “History Wars: Considering Contemporary Fishing Site Disputes,” in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 78.

<sup>47</sup> She explained that only fourteen families currently dry fish in the canyon. Pete, Interview, 29 June 2007.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Although Mrs. Pete explained how Dennis S. Peters' son Oscar Peters had given the site to her mother Lillian (and that she had later taken it over), she admitted that others who do not fish above Yale had recently tried to claim the site. It seems that rather than open conflicts, people question someone else's right or authority to use a particular spot that they regard themselves to have a superior claim to. For example, in 1988 Peter Dennis Peters questioned why Mrs. Pete was fishing at I:yem stating, "I don't know why Rita is claiming our place up there. Her grandfather's place was straight across from Bell Crossing [at I:yem]. I don't want to fight over it. I can't use it anyway."<sup>49</sup> Sonny McHalsie has also noted the controversy around his auntie Rita's<sup>50</sup> claims to the spot where his grandfather fished, clarifying, "they [Mrs. Pete's family] actually should be fishing across the river where I fish and I should be fishing where Rita fishes because my grandfather [Robert Peters] fished there."<sup>51</sup> The inversion of the fishing sites has McHalsie fishing on the east bank of the Fraser – a location only accessible by boats that can traverse the dangerous rapids at Lady Franklin Rock – while Rita Pete fishes at I:yem, which can be accessed by car off the Trans-Canada highway.

Even in this controversy, the way in which Mrs. Pete and her family use the spot is significant, as McHalsie has noted "[the year I wanted to start fishing] she [Mrs. Pete] was already fishing there. She already had her family there, you know the dry rack, cabin, and she was quite comfortable."<sup>52</sup> Similarly, upon being informed that Rita Pete was drying at the contested fishing site, Alan Gutierrez, whose family had also fished at I:yem responded, "that's

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<sup>49</sup> See Peter Dennis Peters, Interview with Sonny McHalsie, Randel Paul, and Richard Daly, 21 September 1988, SNA Oral History Collection, PPD-i-1, p. 20.

<sup>50</sup> Mrs. Pete is McHalsies' mothers' second cousin. See "We Have to Take Care of Everything That Belongs To Us," p. 95.

<sup>51</sup> McHalsie, "We Have to Take Care of Everything That Belongs To Us," p. 96; McHalsie, Interview, 24 June 2007.

<sup>52</sup> McHalsie, "We have to Take Care of Everything that belongs to Us," p. 95.

very good, that somebody is using it, very good.”<sup>53</sup> Seen in this light, it is most important that the fishing spot remains a Stó:lō place where someone with a claim, albeit from some people’s perspectives not necessarily the best claim, continues to fish and dry in a “proper” way. It is her earlier and ongoing use of the site that gives Mrs Pete authority to use the spot today.

As discussed earlier, from the Stó:lō perspective, people are regarded as belonging to places as much as places belong to people. Mrs Gutierrez explained that when some people<sup>54</sup> tried to claim the spot where her daughter continues to fish, “the spirit” protected her from being hurt because her daughter belonged to that area – the ancestors were there before her.<sup>55</sup> In this regard, the memorial at I:yem, by drawing attention to the ancestors buried in the canyon, is a reminder of this connection between the Stó:lō and the canyon as well as their corresponding rights to fish there. The idea that certain people belong to the canyon emphasizes that for the Stó:lō meaning exists within these places and is not simply ascribed to them.

While some Stó:lō people are regarded as belonging to certain places and their relationships with the Fraser Canyon can be seen as protected, the places themselves have and continue to be threatened and changed. It is difficult for an outsider like myself to understand how Tillie Gutierrez’s daughter’s relationship with her canyon fishing place was preserved because she belonged to that place while I:yem itself (as Mrs. Gutierrez knew it) was destroyed by cement fish ladders in the early 1960s. Such changes are further evident in the vandalism that has occurred in the cemetery at I:yem that included the theft of the memorial’s plaque. Yet, while canyon places change the meaning that is inherent in them remains, as does the need for certain

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<sup>53</sup> Alan Gutierrez, Interview with Sonny McHalsie, SNA Oral History Collection, GA 89-13, p. 43. Mr. Gutierrez’s grandparents fished at I:yem.

<sup>54</sup> Mrs. Gutierrez did not specify who these people were.

<sup>55</sup> Gutierrez, Interview, 26 June 2007.

people and families to continue to return to them. In attempting to reconcile ideas of belonging with obvious changes to canyon places, it is suggested here that it is the relationship with the canyon itself that the Stó:lō view as the most important.

Statements of belonging to the Fraser Canyon go beyond articulating an attachment there and can be seen as providing authority to particular claims to these places. It is because individuals and their families belong to their canyon places that they argue their claims are superior to those of others. By articulating this relationship, they actively maintain connections with their canyon places. Nonetheless, competing claims over these places remain, as do competing authorities. While places may own certain people and grant authority to their claims, legally and politically these same places are under the control of groups, to which these individuals may not belong. This is most evident in the Yale Band's role in acceding to the creation of the fish ladders that destroyed Mrs. Gutierrez's family's fishing spot. Even though Mrs. Gutierrez's family belonged to I:yem, as a Yale Indian Reserve it was under the authority of the Yale Indian Band, to which she did not belong.

Authority derived from both belonging to particular places as well as that from legal and political means continues to be invoked in negotiating Aboriginal relationships with their canyon places. These themes of belonging and authority will be further explored as the focus of this analysis turns to the communal aspects of the relationships of the Yale and Stó:lō with I:yem and with each other, as well as their understandings of these relationships. Both the Yale and Stó:lō see themselves as belonging to the Fraser Canyon and are actively engaged in protecting their connections to certain places.

The memorial at I:yem continues to be significant today, as it is currently associated with a larger dispute between the Yale First Nation on the one hand and the Stó:lō Nation and Tribal

Council on the other over fishing rights in the canyon. Since 1938 the legal climate for Aboriginal rights has changed, creating opportunities for land claims and the formation of Aboriginal political organizations to pursue them—including the different incarnations of the Stó:lō Nation, the Stó:lō Tribal Council, the Yale Band, and the Yale First Nation.<sup>56</sup> In some ways, this dispute between the Yale and the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council can be seen as a continuation and culmination of older tensions that were already evident in the 1940s and 1950s between those who stayed in the canyon, and those who migrated down river.<sup>57</sup> As ethnohistorian Keith Thor Carlson explains, “occasionally colonialism creates a context where Indigenous interests clash with one another, and within which both sides invoke history to justify

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<sup>56</sup> Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal People and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia 1849-1989* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1990), p. 122. In many ways a continuation of earlier claims efforts, there has been a notable growth in Native political organizations created to pursue Aboriginal rights and title since the federal governments’ proposed White Paper in 1969. Stó:lō bands participated in the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, which formed in 1969, as well as the Chilliwack Area Council that began when the federal government transferred jurisdiction over their social assistance programme to the council in 1974. Significantly, in 1975 the “self proclaimed Stó:lō Tribes of the Lower Fraser Watershed drafted and adopted the Stó:lō declaration,” which was essentially “a statement of Aboriginal title and rights to all land and resources within their collective tribal territory.” By the early 1980s the political tribal council Stó:lō Nation was formed. The Yale Band was a member of this tribal council, until it withdrew its membership by a Band Council Resolution on June 6<sup>th</sup> 1983. This was not the only conflict within Stó:lō Nation, and in 1985 its member bands split to form two tribal councils—the Stó:lō Nation Canada and the Stó:lō Tribal Council. As Archie Charles who was the Chief of Seabird Island (which became a part of the Stó:lō Tribal Council) explains, “small bands [with as little as ten residents] had as much clout as Seabird Island...that’s why we went independent.” It is significant that following this split both political entities still considered themselves to be Stó:lō, and would unite in the pursuit of common causes and goals. These organizations amalgamated in 1999 before fracturing again in 2005/2006. See Bruce Miller, *The Problem of Justice: Tradition and Law in the Coast Salish World* (Lincoln Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), p. 125; David M. Schaepe, “Stó:lō Identity and the Cultural Landscape of S’olh Téméxw” in *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, ed. Bruce Granville Miller (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007) p. 235; Affidavit of Robert Hope, Chief Robert Hope v. Lower Fraser Fishing Authority and others, file # c92-4333, signed 8<sup>th</sup> July 1992, p. 2; “Yale First Nation Paid Advertisement,” *Chilliwack Progress*, 3 July 1999; Archie Charles, Interview with Byron Plant, June 3 2002, as quoted in Byron Plant, “‘In Principle’: Stó:lō Political Organizations and Attitudes Towards Treaty Since 1969.”

<sup>57</sup> For example in 1945, Seabird elder Mrs. Vincent Peters in reference to her husband explained: “People here say Vincent don’t belong here [at Seabird Island], but his great grandfather lived here ...when he was a young man ...if it was in the olden days could go to Kaltsialup, Putsil [Yale], Iwawus [Iwows near Hope], Hoxalaekp, Hwiauikum, Aesulaeu [Aseláw], Iyzm [I:yem].” Mrs. Peters accentuates that the problem of belonging was relatively recent, further implying that it resulted from changes such as movements away from the canyon and the creation of Indian Reservations. See Mrs. Vincent Peters, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (summer 1945), Royal Anthropological Institute (London Great Britain), 268:4:9 (Copies available at B.C. Archives, Victoria, B.C.), MS-2794.

innovative means to traditional ends.”<sup>58</sup> Thus, the dispute between the Stó:lō and the Yale First Nation is intertwined with their relationships with the federal and provincial governments and the history of colonial changes to the Fraser Canyon. It is in such a context that the memorial has been “re-discovered,” taking on a new political and economic significance. According to Steven Point,

[The I:yem memorial] became politically significant at a time when [in the late 1980s and early 1990s] the Stó:lō were being asked to get a licence to fish up there [in the Fraser Canyon] from the Yale Band.<sup>59</sup> And the Yale Band was trying to get control of the fishery there and our chief was going “why should we get a licence from you when this is our fishery?” There was internal conflict there, and so the memorial became important just to show that the Stó:lō have been up there fishing for a millennium, for a long, long time.<sup>60</sup>

The potential for the memorial to help the Stó:lō re-gain important fishing grounds makes it something that is potentially significant for the majority of Stó:lō people, and potentially harmful to members of the Yale First Nation. Similarly, each group has distinct understandings of the canyon fishery. It is this conflict and its implications for how the Aboriginal people of the Fraser Canyon and Valley continue to understand their canyon places that we now turn our attention to.

The Stó:lō Nation and Stó:lō Tribal Council on the one side and the Yale First Nation on the other have been in court twice since 1992 over who should control access to, and regulate the

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<sup>58</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon,” in *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada’s Native Pasts*, ed. Ted Binnema and Susan Neylan, (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2007), p. 145.

<sup>59</sup> The people from Yale refer to themselves as the Yale First Nation because they view themselves as separate from the Stó:lō. The use of the term Yale Band here promotes the view that they remain a Stó:lō community.

<sup>60</sup> Point, Interview, 29 June 2007.

canyon fishery—and by implication who should be considered Stó:lō.<sup>61</sup> On the one side the Stó:lō groups emphasize that access to the canyon fishery was and is based upon customary family rights to particular fishing stations, and that Yale First Nation is indeed a Stó:lō band. On the other side, the Yale have argued that their chief and council has the right to control access to the canyon fishery and that members of other First Nations, including the Stó:lō, require their permission to use sites in the “Yale fishery.”<sup>62</sup>

This public conflict was sparked by the efforts of the downriver Stó:lō communities to negotiate an Aboriginal Fishing Strategy (AFS) and pilot sales agreements with the Department of Oceans and Fisheries.<sup>63</sup> It is significant that the Stó:lō bands participating in the pilot agreement were collectively thirty times the size of the Yale First Nation.<sup>64</sup> An agreement between the Stó:lō and the federal government was viewed as essential to resolving the existing dispute between the two parties. It was also needed in the wake of the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision in *Sparrow v. Regina* that required a redefining of the “government’s relationship with Natives regarding fishing,” and raised “expectations among Aboriginal people

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<sup>61</sup> See Chief Robert Hope vs. Lower Fraser Fishing Authority and others, Reasons for Judgment of Mr. Justice K. C. MacKenzie, (B.C. Supreme Court Vancouver Registry, 17 July 1992), file # c92-4333; Yale First Nation v. Her Majesty the Queen In Right of Canada et al, Reasons for Judgment of the Honourable Madam Justice Dorgan, (B.C. Supreme Court Victoria Registry, 22 May 2001), file # 746, online, Reasons for Judgments Database, <<http://www.courts.gov.bc.ca/jdb-txt/sc/01/07/2001besc0746.htm>>.

<sup>62</sup> See, Chief Robert Hope, vs. Lower Fraser Fishing Authority and others, Reasons for Judgment of Mr. Justice K. C. MacKenzie, p. 2; See also, Yale Indian Band vs. Aitchelitz Indian Band et al., Reasons for Order of Prothonotary John A Hargrave, (Federal Court Vancouver B.C., 24 June 1998), file # T-776-98, online, Federal Court Decisions Web Site <[http://decisions.fct-cf.gc.ca/en/1998/t-776-98\\_4083/t-776-98.html](http://decisions.fct-cf.gc.ca/en/1998/t-776-98_4083/t-776-98.html)>, p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> The Yale First Nation was involved in agreements from 1993 to 1997, but no agreement was reached in 1998. See, Yale First Nation vs. Her Majesty the Queen In Right of Canada et al, Reasons For Judgment of the Honourable Madam Justice Dorgan, p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> See Chief Robert Hope vs. Lower Fraser Fishing Authority and others, Reasons for Judgment of Mr. Justice K. C. MacKenzie. It should be noted that the Yale First Nation currently has a population of 148 members, 57 that are on their reserve. See, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, “Registered Population as of June, 2008” First Nation Detail, Yale First Nation, online, <[http://pse2esd2.aincinac.gc.ca/fn/profiles/FNProfiles\\_GeneralInformation.asp?BAND\\_NUMBER=589&BAND\\_NAME=Yale+First+Nation](http://pse2esd2.aincinac.gc.ca/fn/profiles/FNProfiles_GeneralInformation.asp?BAND_NUMBER=589&BAND_NAME=Yale+First+Nation)>, (July 2008).

that their demands for commercial rights will be allowed...”<sup>65</sup> The future goal of this agreement was “cooperative management” between the federal government and the Stó:lō groups.<sup>66</sup> Conversely, one of its consequences has been increased conflict between the Yale and Stó:lō over the canyon fishery. Once again, I:yem was a contested place.

The Chief and Council of the Yale First Nation have stressed the negative effect that the Pilot Sales Agreement has had on their relations with the Stó:lō.<sup>67</sup> Ernie Crey, Director of the Stó:lō Fishing Authority programme, explained that with the AFS “the number of Natives fishing on the river doubled almost over night, to about 1,800 with about 1,000 nets.”<sup>68</sup> Many of these fishers availed themselves of the opportunities provided by the natural benefits of the five mile fishery above Yale.<sup>69</sup> This change in the number of fishers alone affected the canyon by increasing the numbers of boats, nets, and everything else that came with them – including garbage. As a result, the ways in which people related to the canyon and each other changed, with a notable increase in interpersonal conflicts that at times threatened to turn violent. Richard Behn, spokesmen for the Yale First Nation emphasized “Yale is not a friendly place when there

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<sup>65</sup> The Sparrow decision determined that the Musqueam band in B.C. “retained an Aboriginal right to fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes, subject to conservation requirements.” See Canada (gov’t) Fisheries and Oceans, “Background,” Aboriginal Fishing Strategy The Context, (June 1992), B-HQ-92-25, as quoted in Affidavit of Chief Robert Norman Hope, Chief Robert Hope et al. v. The Lower Fraser Fishing Authority and others, defendants, (Vancouver registry, July 1992), file # c92-4333, Exhibit R; See also Middleton, “Native Fishery is Thousands of Years Old, Say Bands,” The Province, 11 October 1998, A28-29.

<sup>66</sup> See, Chief Robert Hope vs. Lower Fraser Fishing Authority and others, Reasons for Judgment of Mr. Justice K. C. MacKenzie; Yale First Nation vs. Her Majesty the Queen In Right of Canada et al., Reasons For Judgment of the Honourable Madam Justice Dorgan.

<sup>67</sup> See Greg Middleton, “Band Rivalry was Source of Discord,” The Province, 11 October 1998, A29.

<sup>68</sup> Ernie Crey quoted in Middleton, “Native Fishery is Thousands of Years Old, Say Bands,” A 29.

<sup>69</sup> Richard Behn, a spokesman for the Yale First Nation noted that there were over a thousand people fishing above Yale in 1992. Yale Elder Lawrence Hope has also noted that from his perspective there was an overcrowding of the canyon fishery above Yale as a result of the commercial fishery. See Greg Middleton, “Band Rivalry was Source of Discord”; See Affidavit of Lawrence Hope, Yale Indian Band vs. Aitchelitz Indian Band et al., (Vancouver B.C., June 1998), file # T-776-98.



is a commercial fishery on.”<sup>70</sup> In some ways marking a return to a culturally meaningful spot for the Stó:lō people, this increase in canyon fishers fundamentally changed how people could relate to a place that over the past seventy years has only been used by a few families, seemingly highlighting the role of economical gain in this new relationship.

As the Yale First Nation moves through the treaty process the implications for future relationships with the canyon fishery become apparent. Although the Yale First Nation reached an Agreement in Principle<sup>71</sup> on March 6<sup>th</sup> 2006 with the federal and provincial governments, they continue to have “overlapping claims in the Fraser Valley” with the Stó:lō.<sup>72</sup> Part of the “Yale Agreement in Principle” outlines that their government would determine who has rights to harvest fish in their territory under the final agreement. In addition to the allocation of these resources, the Yale First Nation would become responsible for setting out methods, timing, and location of fish harvesting, with the potential for commercial opportunities.<sup>73</sup> Beyond rights and access to the canyon fishery, this agreement would officially solidify the position of I:yem (as part of Yale Indian Reserve 22) as an area under the control of the Yale First Nation rather than the Stó:lō collectively. The culture and heritage section of the agreement that seeks to promote the Yale’s culture and their Puchil dialect of the Nlaka’pamux<sup>74</sup> language provides opportunities

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<sup>70</sup> Middleton, “Band Rivalry was Source of Discord.”

<sup>71</sup> The Agreement in Principle is the fourth step in the six step treaty process, and is to reflect the guiding principles in negotiations between B.C., Canada and the First Nation.

<sup>72</sup> B.C. Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Yale First Nation Agreement In Principle Brochure, online, < [http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/firstnation/yale/down/yale\\_aip\\_brochure\\_01.pdf](http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/firstnation/yale/down/yale_aip_brochure_01.pdf)>, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> Yale First Nation Treaty Negotiations Agreement in Principle, Vancouver, 9 March 2006, online, < [http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/bc/treapro/ston/aip/yalaip/yalfin\\_e.pdf](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/bc/treapro/ston/aip/yalaip/yalfin_e.pdf)>, pp. 47, 50.

<sup>74</sup> “Puchil” is actually a Halq’emélem corruption of the English word “Fort Yale.” It should be noted that historically, the people at Yale spoke a dialect of Halq’emélem. See for example, Duff, *The Upper Stalo*, p. 12, 19. As will be further discussed later, the use of the Nlaka’pamux language at Yale represents the recent history and current reality of the Aboriginal people of the area.

for the Yale First Nation to name or rename places in their territory.<sup>75</sup> This could result in I:yem, which is a Halq'emélem name, being changed to reflect the particular family histories of those at Yale and their understandings of that place. Such possibilities worry the Stó:lō downriver, as they are regarded as threatening their access to the territory as well as the identity of places they view as historically Stó:lō. As Steven Point notes, “once they have a constitutional right to do that, it’s pretty tough to change.”<sup>76</sup>

The above mentioned court cases and treaty negotiations contribute to how people are able to relate to the Fraser Canyon, and demonstrate the role of law in shaping people’s understandings of I:yem and its memorial. These decisions and negotiations continue to define Native places, and in some ways can be seen as a continuation of the mapping and remapping of Indian Reservations in B.C. that began in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, current negotiations affect how people relate to places and one another – especially in their assertions over to whom the canyon belongs, and what types of rights Aboriginal people have to certain places. Such formal articulations of rights to the Fraser Canyon are fundamentally what Dennis S. Peters and others advocated for in 1938. It is ironic that as a result of the claims process the identity of I:yem may formally change again as it is negotiated as a Yale place rather than a Stó:lō one. Like the memorial itself, current efforts to preserve certain attachments to places fundamentally change how they are understood. Conflict, whether it is between families, with the federal and provincial governments and most recently Aboriginal groups, has consistently

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<sup>75</sup> Yale First Nation Treaty Negotiations Agreement in Principle, p. 545, section 1.

<sup>76</sup> Steven Point, Interview by Andree Boiselle and Amanda Fehr, Digitally recorded, Chilliwack, B.C., 29 June 2007, Copies of interview available through SNA.

<sup>77</sup> Cole Harris has noted the legal realities of the “arbitrary boundaries identified on the reserve maps.” See, Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance and Reserves in British Columbia*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), p. 271.

been an aspect of how the Fraser Canyon is understood. Yet the adversarial nature of recent court cases and land claims seem to be especially divisive, and have emphasized that the Fraser Canyon is partially a legal space that continues to be defined by processes that are never entirely within Aboriginal control. In this way, the current conflict raises broader issues about the role of courts and the treaty process in determining who can form relations to particular places, and how they are able to do so.

The conflicts between the Yale First Nation and the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council relates not only to who should have rights to fish in the Fraser Canyon, but who should be considered Stó:lō. As such they are also about assertions of authority. Individuals' understandings of places are clearly not conceptualized in isolation and are often done in comparison with others. Extant statements by Robert Hope and Steven Point are similar in how they describe their own communities compared to those of the other. Carlson has noted that in contemporary Indigenous conflicts, "a group will often assert that its claim to a particular resource is superior to another's because it is more 'traditional.'"<sup>78</sup> In this conflict between the Stó:lō and the Yale, in addition to invocations of tradition and history, the Aboriginal people of the Fraser Canyon and Valley tend to undermine their opponent's claims by dichotomizing the economic motives of the two sides. Both sides speak of what the other stands to gain from controlling the canyon, and what their own group stands to lose. Some members of the Stó:lō First Nation have suggested that the Yale decided "they weren't Stó:lō anymore," when it became politically and economically prudent for them to do so.<sup>79</sup> Yet, when referring to their own claim, these Stó:lō spokespersons typically

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<sup>78</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, "Toward an Indigenous Historiography: Events, Migrations, and the Formation of Post-Contact Coast Salish Collective Identities," in *Be of Good Mind*, p. 139.

<sup>79</sup> According to Steven Point the conflict between the Yale and the Stó:lō goes back to the creation of the Canada-United States Pacific Salmon Convention and associated catch agreement. When the Commission found that

focus on the personal aspects of their connections to canyon places.<sup>80</sup> Chief Robert Hope of Yale provides a counter argument asserting that the people at Yale were only included in the Stó:lō group by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development as an “administrative convenience.”<sup>81</sup> Ironically, Steven Point explained that when the government put the canyon fishing reserves under the authority of the Yale Band it was also a matter of “administrative convenience.”<sup>82</sup> Statements emphasizing the need for individuals and groups to have meaningful relationships with their places while denying others that same connection reveals that both the Stó:lō and Yale draw upon their personal connections with these places to add authority to their own claims.

While both sides emphasize their personal connections to canyon places and the role of those connections in their group identities, the clear economic benefits of the canyon fishery seems (to an outsider’s eyes) glaring and contradictory. As such, they raise questions about my own assumptions in interpreting information that has been shared with me. Identities and cultures

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the Stó:lō were selling their allocated fish commercially in the late 1950s, Canada began enforcing earlier legislation preventing the sale of fish by Aboriginal people. As a result, much of the Aboriginal fishery went “underground.” It was later when it became legal to sell fish that the fight between the Stó:lō and the people at Yale began. They didn’t want Stó:lō Nation to be controlling what they viewed as their industry, “that’s why they aren’t Stó:lō.” Summary from Point, Interview, 29 June 2007.

<sup>80</sup> For example, Ken Malloway a Stó:lō commercial fisherman emphasized that the “dispute is not just about ‘property,’ in the European sense It is about family, and personal identity; about the need for cultural survival. We are borrowing the land and the resources from the children who are yet unborn.” See, Ken Malloway, as quoted in Mark Falkenberg, “Family Feud: Stó:lō Say Fight Over Fishing Rights with Yale Band Comes Down to Respect for Traditional Fishing Patterns,” *Chilliwack Progress*, 17 April 1998, p. 9.

<sup>81</sup> The *Chilliwack Progress*, 17 March 2006, as quoted in Fraser Valley Treaty Advisory Committee Local Media Excerpts to March 31st, 2006, online, < <http://www.fvrd.bc.ca/NR/rdonlyres/37719ADD-6E99-4634-BD00-B53E396C7D86/928/LocalMediaReporttoMarch3106.pdf>>.

<sup>82</sup> Steven Point, Interview, 29 June 2007. Issues of government mistakes in naming reserves are not new, as they were raised in the 1950s by Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto from Hope who explained to Wilson Duff that Xe’tet was put under the Yale band by mistake. The Lorenzettos explained that the “Commissioner going by didn’t land there, and Liyik travelling with him, said he’d take care of their other places out of his kindness. Commissioner said he’d come back, but didn’t so χōtōt stayed with Yale band, not foreseeing trouble at present.” See, Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzetto, Wilson Duff, Unpublished Fieldnotes, Notebook #7, Summer1950, Royal British Columbia Museum, (Copies at SNA).

are inherently political, and typically promote the interests of their members. Yet, whereas my own biases accept economic self-interest in the past from people vying for control over valuable canyon resources, the present claims that stand to financially benefit one Aboriginal group over another, seem less palatable. It is significant that the relationships of the Stó:lō and the Yale to their canyon places have primarily been articulated and mobilized in the more adversarial settings of the court room, treaty table, local media, and other political forums. This public dispute has been characterized by outsiders as Aboriginal groups “vying for control of the lucrative Canyon fishery in the courts and at the treaty table,”<sup>83</sup> or alternatively as only a “rivalry skirmish and contest between Indian bands over where they might catch their given allocation of salmon.”<sup>84</sup>

Such normative assessments tend to rationalize the conflict. They are also reductionist – narrowing the conflict to what people stand to gain economically.<sup>85</sup> It is important to avoid simple answers derived from outside cultural perspectives and to attempt to take the economic aspects of these relationships with place seriously. Consequently I must reconsider the testimony of those individuals and groups whose self-interest is easiest to critique, as well as the accounts of those, such as Mrs. Gutierrez, whose claims of personal connections are simple to uncritically accept. Just as an Aboriginal commercial fisher may have more complex personal relationships with his/her fishing places, those who have emphasized the inherent meaning of the

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<sup>83</sup> Robert Freeman, “Bands Feud Over Canyon Cleaning,” *Chilliwack Progress*, 18 May 1999.

<sup>84</sup> *Yale Indian Band v. Aitchelitz Indian Band et al.*, Reasons for Order of Prothonotary John A. Hargrave, 1998, p. 7.

<sup>85</sup> There is also a tendency for some scholars to be critical of Aboriginal groups that seem to prioritize more local band based identities in the pursuit of economic advantages. For example, lawyer and historian Alexandra Harmon has explained “people of Native ancestry have related their histories in order to show that they meet government definitions of Indian, tribe or band and are therefore entitled to particular resources.”<sup>85</sup> See, Alexandra Harmon “Coast Salish History,” in *Be of Good Mind* pp. 46-48; Alexandra Harmon; See also Miller, *The Problem of Justice*; Tennant; Harris.

places may also economically benefit from the fish that they and their families catch there. While acknowledging the validity of economical aspects of relationship to places, it remains necessary to question how representative an individual's testimony is of the Stó:lō or the Yale, their family, and their own personal perspective. This conflict, however, that has at times been violent,<sup>86</sup> is not simply about fish. It is also, and I argue more fundamentally, about maintaining important relationships to particular places, even when it could be more convenient and just as profitable, given changes in technology, to fish elsewhere. In this way, Aboriginal relationships with the Fraser Canyon are not only about fish or identities, but also about the continued meaning of the canyon itself, and the need of both the Yale and Stó:lō to maintain their connections with those places.

Even the broader political conflict cannot be separated from the personal aspects of place. This is especially evident in statements made by respected Yale elder Lawrence Hope regarding the canyon fishery—statements that are inherently political, yet fundamentally personal.<sup>87</sup> Like Tillie Gutierrez, Sonny McHalsie, and Rita Pete, Mr. Hope emphasizes his own personal connections with and experiences in the Fraser Canyon. He established his privileged voice and authority by asserting, “I think I am the only one that grew up in the canyon that is left. I am the

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<sup>86</sup> For example, Ken Malloway has referred to violent confrontations between the Yale and Stó:lō over the fishery. He has also emphasized that, “our people [the Stó:lō] would die for those fishing spots, literally, our people would die for those fishing spots.” See Ken Malloway, Interview by Katya MacDonald and Sarah Nickel, Digitally recorded, Sardis B.C., 22 June 2007, Copies of interview available at SNA, p. 10.

<sup>87</sup> Lawrence Hope was born in the 1920s at Seabird Island. Although his grandfather George Hope had moved the family to Seabird from Yale to farm, the family seasonally returned to the canyon to fish. When Lawrence Hope's parents married, George moved back to Yale, and Lawrence Hope's mother, Lena (nee Charlie) took over the farm. Lawrence Hope explained that the farm “wasn't much of a success, so we more or less moved to Yale all the summer months...” Lawrence Hope is the father of Chief Robert Hope. Lawrence Hope, Interview by Sonny McHalsie, Randel Paul, and Richard Daly, Albert Flat's Reserve, 25 November 1988, SNA Oral History Collection, 88SR46-49, p. 4.

only one that truly lived in the canyon, in the fishing ground that saw things.”<sup>88</sup> It is these experiences that legitimize his claims and add to his own status, even though he clearly is not the only person who grew up in the canyon. Furthermore, his childhood experiences of spending time in the canyon with his family inform Mr. Hope’s current understandings of these places.

It is interesting to explore Lawrence Hope’s description of the Stó:lō asking permission of the Chief at Yale to fish in the canyon. As Mr. Hope explains, in the past a person would not say “I want to come here to fish.”<sup>89</sup> Rather, he reminisces:

When I was a young boy, I remember that before anyone went fishing they always dropped in to say hello and pay their respects to my grandfather.<sup>90</sup> This was a customary way of asking permission to fish in our territory. The arrival of guests into our territory for purposes of fishing was a cause of celebration, they would stay over night with the chief before going to the river and would visit us again on their departure. This happened on a yearly basis.<sup>91</sup>

Lawrence Hopes’ understandings of the canyon are shaped by his relationships with his family, especially his grandfather, and also by his interactions with all of those who fished there at the time. Although this statement that outlines proper protocols between insiders and outsiders, (suggesting that the territory belongs to those at Yale), it is essentially about relationships between people and the places they share. Mr. Hope’s sentiment that such connections have been lost is evident in the simple statement, “but those days are gone.”<sup>92</sup> Like his great uncles Dennis S. Peters and Isaac James, Lawrence Hope has personally experienced changes in the canyon,

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<sup>88</sup> Lawrence Hope, Interview, 25 November 1988, SNA, p. 13.

<sup>89</sup> Affidavit of Lawrence Hope, Yale Indian Band vs. Aitchelitz Indian Band et al., section [30].

<sup>90</sup> Mr. Hope is referring to his mother’s stepfather, who was Chief Jimmie Charlie. Jimmie Charlie was Dennis S. Peters and Isaac James’ brother-in law.

<sup>91</sup> Affidavit of Lawrence Hope, Chief Robert Hope et al. vs. The Lower Fraser Fishing Authority and others, (Vancouver registry, July 1992) file # c92-4333, p. 5; For similar statements see also, “New Head of Fisheries Meets Canyon Band,” The Hope Standard, 13 July 2000, p. 13; Affidavit of Lawrence Hope, Yale Indian Band vs. Aitchelitz Indian Band et al., section [30].

<sup>92</sup> Affidavit of Lawrence Hope, Yale Indian Band vs. Aitchelitz Indian Band et al., section [33].

<sup>92</sup> “New Head of Fisheries Meets Canyon Band.”

and as a result views the present as lacking when compared to his ideals of the past.<sup>93</sup> Yet, whereas one of Dennis S. Peters' and Isaac James' goals was for more Stó:lō people to fish and use the canyon, Lawrence Hope's sense of a lost personal connection is a result of increased Stó:lō fishing there associated with the commercial fishery. The historical processes that Peters and James were trying to change in 1938 are held up by Mr. Hope as an idealized past.

Lawrence Hope's articulation of lost personal connections between people is similar to statements made by Tillie Gutierrez and Sonny McHalsie while marking a subtle shift from the motivations of Dennis S. Peters and Isaac James. Whereas the memorials' creators accentuated particular aspects of Stó:lō relationships with the canyon (namely fish and ancestors), people today instead emphasize maintaining personal connections with places in general.<sup>94</sup> This is potentially in response to differing threats to people's relationships with the canyon and the realities of the current relationships between the Stó:lō and the Yale, as Lawrence Hope notably focused on lost personal relationships between people rather than with the canyon itself. In this way Mr. Hope's conceptions of the Fraser Canyon shaped by his relationships with those that he experienced it with are similar to Mrs. Gutierrez's memories of the I:yem of her childhood that ceases to exist in the present. Furthermore, Lawrence Hope's interpretation complements that of Sonny McHalsie, as both stress a sense of loss, change, and a need to regain connections with places and between the people who share them. While articulating seemingly different political

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<sup>93</sup> It is Mr. Hope's experiences of change that enable him to evaluate it. See, R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* Revised Edition with Lectures 1926 – 1928, ed. Jan Van Der Dussen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 326.

<sup>94</sup> One must question if this is in fact a subtle shift in historical consciousness or a reflection of differing contexts of discussions and use of sources. Whereas current perspectives are based on my own interviews, transcripts of earlier interviews and signed statements of the actors themselves earlier understandings are based on a reading of petitions, newspaper articles and fieldnotes.



perspectives, Mr. Hope and Mr. McHalsie share concerns over their perspective communities' lost connections to the Fraser Canyon and seek to re-assert their attachments there.

Building on Mr. Hope's personal understandings of the Fraser Canyon, I will now explore how the broader community at Yale relates to, and interprets, this place. In attempting to look at I:yem as a Yale place, it is necessary to take seriously and historicize the Yale's claim of not being Stó:lō. This exploration of the heretofore-unexamined experiences of those who stayed in the Fraser Canyon rather than migrate downriver in the late nineteenth century, suggests how they responded to changes to their places and came to view themselves as a distinct group of Aboriginal people of both Stó:lō and Nlaka'pamux heritage.<sup>95</sup> Newspaper articles, public statements, and earlier oral interviews with members of the Yale First Nation reveal that the Yale's interpretation of their history is fundamentally shaped by particular familial connections and experiences. Over time, the families at Yale have changed and by 1952, there were only three family groups that were a part of the Yale Band, including those of Peter Emery and Patrick Charlie.<sup>96</sup> The majority of men who stayed in the canyon married upriver Nlaka'pamux women and their "families negotiated membership in both 'communities.'"<sup>97</sup> Anthropologist Andrea Laforet has noted that in the 1970s, the Aboriginal people at Yale were of both Upper

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<sup>95</sup> As Lawrence Hope explains, "as far as I look back, they have those people who were here, when I was young, they were mostly connected to the Thompson [Nlaka'pamux] people, even though they lived down the lower valley." Lawrence Hope, Interview, 25 November 1988, SNA, p. 39; See also, Yale First Nation Treaty Negotiations Agreement in Principle.

<sup>96</sup> LAC, RG10 vol. 7128, file 987/3-5, pt. 2, Letter to W. S. Arneil, Indian Commissioner for B.C., from J. C. Letcher, Superintendent New Westminster Agency, B.C., 28 January 1952, Fraser District—Vancouver and New Westminster Agency—Elections of Chiefs and Councilors for the Various Bands in the Ares.

<sup>97</sup> Andrea Laforet and Annie York, *Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories, 1808- 1939* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), p. 137. Notably the Charlie family and Maggie Emery's family negotiated memberships in Spuzzum and Yale. The Hope family that is currently prominent at Yale also has links to Spuzzum. See, Irene Bjerky, "First Peoples of Yale and Spuzzum," *Colourful Characters in Historic Yale*, <[http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/pm.php?id=story\\_line&fl=0&lg=English&ex=00000150&sl=5044&pos=15](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/pm.php?id=story_line&fl=0&lg=English&ex=00000150&sl=5044&pos=15)> (15 June 2008).

Stó:lō and Nlaka'pamux descent.<sup>98</sup> As familial connections and rights to certain places can be seen to centre a person's own spatial orientation, changes to particular families over time would impact their members' understandings of their places. Such an upriver focus of the leaders and major families at Yale, which to an extent was natural for such a border community, would have differed from how those who moved down river for agricultural opportunities related to the territory.<sup>99</sup> Over time identities shifted and ethnogenesis potentially occurred as the descendants of the Emerys, Charlies, and Hopes learned the Nlaka'pamux language and associated histories of their grandparents.<sup>100</sup> This is not to say, as has been claimed in court, that the Stó:lō do not have ancestral links to the Fraser Canyon and family rights to its fishery. There is evidence from reserve commissions, oral history and the memorial itself noting that those who moved down river considered themselves to have retained their canyon fishing rights. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the disputes between the Yale and the Stó:lō are linked to their changing relationships with particular places, and that the formation and articulation of new identities can be seen as legitimate responses to such changes.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Andrea Laforet, "Folk History in a Small Canadian Community," (PhD Dissertation, UBC, 1974), p. 33.

<sup>99</sup> As early as 1945, Fred Ewen explained to one of Marian Smith's students that the Taltit or Yale People were a joining of the Halq'emélem and "Thompson people in the Stalo." See Fred Ewen, Marian Smith Fieldnotes, Unpublished (summer 1945), 268:2:1 (13), (Copies available at B.C. Archives, Victoria B.C.), MS-2794.

<sup>100</sup> The use of language and history in families of both Nlaka'pamux and Stó:lō heritage would likely influence understandings of place. For example, Chief Jimmie Charlie's brother Patrick Charlie's daughters were only taught to speak their mother's language, Nlaka'pamux even though their father spoke Stó:lō. Similarly, although Lawrence Hope's father spoke Stó:lō and his mother spoke Nlaka'pamux they did not use their Native languages in front of their children, as they thought they would be more successful if they only spoke English. However, Mr. Hope's grandparents spoke Nlaka'pamux around him. There is a link between language, the names of particular places, and the knowledge of those places that can be derived from their names. In this way language and history are directly tied to understandings of place. It also seems that with language there were certain aspects such as place names that were important to preserve even if the rest of the language was lost. This is evident in the use of the terms "Stalo" and "Eayem" on the I:yem Memorial. See for example, Elsie Charlie, Interview with Sonny McHalsie, Richard Daly, Randel Paul, and Peter John, Richard Hope's Camp Spuzzum B.C., 2 August 1988, SNA Oral History Collection, p. 22; Lawrence Hope, Interview, 25 November 1988, SNA, pp. 6-7.

<sup>101</sup> This discussion fits into a body of literature that rightly describes the Coast Salish as a "fluid, supratribal society." However, some scholars seem to privilege Aboriginal identities and affiliations that grow to be more

This exploration of Yale understandings of the canyon sheds light on some of their differences with the Stó:lō, especially the contested claim that the Stó:lō require the Yale Chief's permission to fish in the canyon. According to Bob Joe, the I:yem Memorial asserted the right of all of the Stó:lō people to fish in the five mile fishery above Yale. In contrast, he noted the different relationship that the Nlaka'pamux had with the area, as they needed to get permission before fishing there.<sup>102</sup> This explanation offers a possible reason as to why the current Chief and Council of the Yale Band, individuals with Nlaka'pamux heritage, believe that other groups, such as the Stó:lō, need permission to fish in the canyon. This is reflective of how their ancestors and families understood outsiders to relate to the fishery.

The use of the I:yem Memorial in court demonstrates how the role of the monument has changed from a claim in itself to evidence in a claim made significant because of the overlapping claims of the Stó:lō and Yale. The existence of the memorial was recently used as evidence by Peter Sumner Charlie who was charged on July 25<sup>th</sup> 2001 for fishing without a license and having salmon in his possession.<sup>103</sup> Both Mr. Charlie and Bob Hall (who held the fisheries portfolio at Stó:lō Nation at the time)<sup>104</sup> referred to the memorial in their argument that fishing in the canyon near I:yem was a Stó:lō cultural right. For example, Mr. Charlie explained that the

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expansive over those that become narrower. Arguably, current interpretations of the Yale's identity and understandings of place, while narrower than those of the Stó:lō, still fit into a context of fluidity and flux that involves both expansions and contractions. See Harmon "Coast Salish History," pp. 47-48; See also, Wayne Suttles, "The Persistence of Intervillage Ties," in *Coast Salish Essays*, ed. Wayne Suttles (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987); Bruce Miller, *The Problem of Justice*; Carlson, "Toward an Indigenous Historiography: Events, Migrations, and the Formation of Post-Contact Coast Salish Collective Identities."

<sup>102</sup> Bob Joe, "Bob Joe at Tzeachten February 8, 1962" in Oliver Wells Interview Collection (1961-1968), transcript, SNA, p. 103.

<sup>103</sup> R. vs. Peter Sumner Charlie, Reasons for Judgment of the Honourable Judge Wendy A Young, (Chilliwack, Provincial Court of British Columbia, 24 January 2005), file # 15348-1, online, Provincial Court of British Columbia Judgment Database < [http://www.provincialcourt.bc.ca/judgments/pc/2005/00/p05\\_0057.htm](http://www.provincialcourt.bc.ca/judgments/pc/2005/00/p05_0057.htm)>, p. 2.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, p. 9 [76].

memorial was “placed for the Indians to fish there. It was there – when they gave that chunk of land to the Stó:lō Nation to fish, they put that in there. That is their chunk of land.”<sup>105</sup> This statement provides further insights into current interpretations of the memorial as used in court. Like Bob Joe forty years before, Peter Charlie focuses on the memorial’s role in granting and articulating the rights of the Stó:lō to fish in the five mile fishery above Yale, and does not mention its reference to the ancestors buried in the canyon cemeteries. Furthermore, the term Stó:lō on the memorial is especially significant as in court Stó:lō fishers need to establish not only that Aboriginal people were fishing in the canyon, but due to overlapping claims with the Yale First Nation, that they were historically Stó:lō. As Judge Wendy Young explained, the case was “Further complicated by recent conflict between Stó:lō Nation and the Yale Band with respect to who has the right to fish in the area upstream of the village of Yale.”<sup>106</sup> Thus, the most significant factor in court is the historical data of who erected the I:yem Memorial and when they did so, rather than the specific reasons for its creation.

The use of the I:yem Memorial in this case demonstrates some of the potential complications of such a setting for the significance of the monument. Judge Young’s ruling did not find favour with the defendant as she viewed the historical claim of the Stó:lō to the canyon (as presented in this case) to be problematic. She explained that,

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<sup>105</sup> R. vs. Peter Sumner Charlie, Proceedings at Trial, Provincial Court of British Columbia, (Before Her Honour Wendy A. Young), (Chilliwack, B.C., 25 February 2004), file # 15348, p. 19. Thanks to Gail Mullock and Katya MacDonald.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, p. 2, [8]. Significantly, this case demonstrates the at times contradictory nature of individual and family understandings of the conflict between the Yale and Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council. There is evidence of confusion in the testimony between the political entities Stó:lō Nation and Tribal Council and the cultural group the Stó:lō. There were also differences in interpretations of the conflict in the testimony of Peter Charlie and his wife Rose Charlie. It is significant here that Mrs. Charlie’s background is part Nlaka’pamux, so she spoke of familial connections to the Hope family at Yale and needing to be invited to fish there (which was true for the Nlaka’pamux). In contrast, Mr. Charlie emphasized that the Hope family was not even from Yale, but were from Seabird so did not have any special authority over the area. See, R. vs. Peter Sumner Charlie, Reasons for Judgment of the Honourable Judge Wendy A. Young.

Other than referring to Commission minutes and some words on a present day monument, I note that no photograph was ever entered of the monument. The evidence is unclear as to what the monument signifies...<sup>107</sup>

In the courtroom, the memorial is essentially removed from its place at I:yem. Its significance is no longer that it exists in space and time, but that it once did—that the right person created it at an early enough date. What the court required was a picture of the text, as it is only the words and their assertion of Stó:lō rights to the fishery that are meaningful. In this context, other aspects of the memorial and to an extent places themselves are easily overlooked or forgotten. Rather than the memorial, it is now a Judge's ruling that seems to determine aspects of the Stó:lō's relationships with their canyon places.

It is important not to overemphasize the contest over being Stó:lō, and thereby limit present-day understandings of place to those terms. Carlson provides an important reminder that Native rights litigation is a “theatre in which identity and affiliation tend to be drawn in stark, often binary terms: plaintiffs and defendants, Indians and whites, supporters and opponents...”<sup>108</sup> Accordingly, in the abovementioned court cases and treaty negotiations a variety of understandings of the Fraser Canyon are often reduced to two perspectives—Yale versus Stó:lō. While these perspectives remain significant and often relate to individuals' understandings of the Fraser Canyon, they do not fully capture the complexity of the many relationships that the people of the Fraser Valley and Canyon had and continue to have with the canyon and I:yem. In addition to challenging each other, the perspectives of the Yale and Stó:lō are also interconnected, drawing on a common history, albeit at times different aspects and

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<sup>107</sup> R. vs. Peter Sumner Charlie, Reasons for Judgment of the Honourable Judge Wendy A. Young, p. 19, [138].

<sup>108</sup> Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition Colonialism, and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts,” p. 145.

interpretations. In their relationships to place, members of both groups emphasize the role of government regulations and other colonial changes to their places. They attempt to respond to perceived threats to their relationships and recreate personal attachments with the canyon. Clearly a variety of relationships with the Fraser Canyon and I:yem continue to exist. While the interests of the elite seem to have shifted to the formal political positions of councils and bands, there remain differences between and within groups as particular families and individuals have their own distinct relationships to and understandings of the canyon.<sup>109</sup>

Although there is a difference between such a general political significance, and the personal connections that Tillie Gutierrez, Rita Pete, Lawrence Hope, and Sonny McHalsie emphasized, these differing views (while not necessarily informed by one another) cannot be completely separated. Tillie Gutierrez, Rita Pete, and Archie Charles had little to say about the political conflict between the Yale First Nation and the Stó:lō, and Archie Charles, who fishes for food and not commercial sale, reported never having problems with the Yale Band.<sup>110</sup> Their connections to I:yem and the fishery were personal. To Tillie Gutierrez, I:yem was her grandparents fishing spot. To Rita Pete I:yem is where her own fishing spot and dry rack are located as well as the graveyard that she is responsible for looking after. Then again, even those who emphasized more personal relationships with I:yem have also been involved in the more political aspects of things and vice versa. Mrs. Gutierrez testified in the Vanderpeet case that eventually went to the Supreme Court of Canada regarding Aboriginal rights to commercially

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<sup>109</sup> This discussion includes the perspectives of people of different genders and social positions (both formal and informal).

<sup>110</sup> Charles, Interview, 28 June 2007.

sell fish.<sup>111</sup> Archie Charles, who was the chief of Seabird Island for many years and served as one of the grand chiefs of the Stó:lō, was personally named in the court cases between the Yale and the Stó:lō over fishing in the Fraser Canyon. Even Mrs. Pete referred to some trouble with the Yale First Nation, noting that although her fishing spot at I:yem is not on reserve land, members of the Yale Band “came there measuring it.”<sup>112</sup> In contrast, Steven Point, whose interpretation of the I:yem Memorial was the most overtly political, has also been engaged as the ritualists who conducted the sacred burning ceremony at I:yem for Mrs. Pete. Most notably Lawrence Hope’s testimony and affidavit while providing the foundation for the Yale First Nation’s claim, is especially personal. Finally, even though Sonny McHalsie recognizes the political significance of the memorial and its implications for Stó:lō identity and history, has conducted research for claims, and testified in court, I:yem is where his ancestors lived, fished, and where his great-grandfather built a memorial—by extension, this is a place where he belongs.

When asked about the current significance of I:yem to the Stó:lō people, Sonny McHalsie explained that he was “not sure if too many people think about it, but that’s something that is going to come back eventually. You know, I really feel that we need more of an attachment to the area up there.”<sup>113</sup> The I:yem memorial no longer provides that primary attachment. Rather than preserving a physical connection for the Stó:lō people to their canyon places, the memorial is now largely an example of a past relationship and can be used as evidence in attempts by the Stó:lō to forge and maintain relationships with these canyon places in their present and for the

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<sup>111</sup> Mrs. Gutierrez provided testimony in 1989. The Stó:lō supported Dorothy Vanderpeet and brought the case all the way to the Supreme Court. Although the Supreme Court did not find in favour of Mrs. Vanderpeet in 1996, the case resulted in the court providing criteria for establishing Aboriginal rights.

<sup>112</sup> Pete, Interview, 29 June 2007.

<sup>113</sup> McHalsie, Interview, 24 June 2007.

future. In this way the meaning of the memorial, the need to establish and maintain relationships with the canyon and claim what aspects of that relationship are non-negotiable remains while the memorial itself is often forgotten. I:yem is an important place for those who have connections to it and continue to fish there with their families. Those who have preserved their own connections to I:yem remain positive that their communities will regain their lost attachment to the place. Some of these visions for the future involve the seemingly forgotten memorial. For example Mrs. Pete has explained that her son Richard wants to get another plaque for the monument.<sup>114</sup> Others like Mr. McHalsie continue to search for alternative means to assert their connections to the canyon for future generations. Regardless of what form these assertions take, what remains constant is the need of the Stó:lō and the Yale to continually make them.

This chapter has explored how a few Aboriginal people of the Fraser Canyon and Valley, continue to understand the Fraser Canyon in general and I:yem in particular, and what aspects of those places they choose to preserve in their own present. The ways in which Sonny McHalsie, Tillie Gutierrez, Archie Charles, Rita Pete, and Steven Point, as well as Lawrence Hope spoke of I:yem demonstrates the continued importance of connections to places, memory, belonging, authority, ancestors, and fishing for both personal and political reasons. The I:yem memorial has and continues to be both political and personal. As a result, the ongoing reinterpretation of it through the lens of political conflicts is not something that is completely new. Still, it seems that different values are given to particular aspects of the memorial in the present than in the past. Most notably, the use of the memorial as evidence in court suggests that its significance is not so much that it exists, but that it once did. At the same time however, current interpretations of the

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<sup>114</sup> Pete, Interview, 29 June 2007.



memorial seem to place a greater emphasis on the importance of re-establishing personal connections with the Fraser Canyon in general, rather than stating what specific aspects of those relationships are non-negotiable and need to be preserved. In this sense, the prevalent concern that many aspects of I:yem have been lost or forgotten is actually one of losing meaning and attachments with what continues to be understood as an important place. Like the memorial erected by Dennis S. Peters and Isaac James, the Stó:lō and Yale's understandings of their canyon places are indicative of both continuity and change. While there are apparent shifts in how people relate to, and understand, the Fraser Canyon, the ever present need to remember their places there and establish connections with them remains—especially in the midst of change.

## CONCLUSION

Our culture is still there, it's just that it is so strong, it's something that we can't take back all at once. We can take only a little of it back at a time. And each time we take a little bit of our culture back it makes us stronger so that we can take back more.

- Stan Green<sup>1</sup>

That connection to the land is brought about not only through the transformations of Xexá:ls but also through the fact that many of our people—we talked earlier about the Eayem Memorial and the cemeteries—...And then you start understanding how important it is for us to become part of where we came from again.

- Sonny McHalsie<sup>2</sup>

Ideas of memory and connections to certain landscapes are intricately related to individual and group identities. I:yem is not only a place that is politically significant for the Stó:lō in their disputes with the Yale First Nation, it is also personally meaningful to many of the people who were interviewed for this project. Throughout this thesis I have attempted to unveil the importance of place making and relationships in the way identities are constructed. Although the I:yem memorial was created to preserve particular aspects of Stó:lō history and memory, there are many different meanings and identities that can be taken from it. Meaning is never simply something that is ascribed to places – it also exists within them. This is especially true at I:yem, where people's ancestors are located and where they themselves belong. It is through the process of returning to these places that aspects of memory and identity are regained and new connections with the landscape created.

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<sup>1</sup> A Stó:lō elders' teaching that was relayed to Naxaxalhts'i, Albert (Sonny) McHalsie by Stan Green. See Naxaxalhts'i, Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, "We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us," in *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, ed. Bruce Granville Miller, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Sonny McHalsie, "We have to Take Care of Everything that Belong to Us," p. 108.

Perhaps the differences in how people relate to I:yem are less an issue (or a crisis) of memory than one of meaning. Recent scholarship asks us to consider that meaning precedes experience. Memories alone can remind people of the past, but it is the meaning that is brought to them that provides a connection with the landscape and particular places within it. In this way, the remembered past of the I:yem memorial has many different meanings. Over the past seventy years, I:yem and the memorial there have been celebrated, forgotten, rediscovered, and remembered. The meanings people have brought to this place shape the experiences they have there, thereby informing the identities that emerge from this complex relationship. In this way, it is through asserting the right to define the meaning, rather than argue about the experience, that the Aboriginal people of the Fraser Canyon and Valley express their agency. Through their regained memories they rediscover and re-establish connections with their places in the Fraser Canyon. It is this need for meaningful relationships with places that seems to link the personal with the political, the tangible and the intangible, and relationships between the dead, the living, and those yet unborn—demonstrating continuity in a place that has, and will continue, to change.

Continuity and change in relationships between people and their places are also reflected in linguistic transitions from Halq'emélem to English and the use of place names. Notably the use of the Halq'emélem terms “Stalo” and “Eayem” amidst the English text of the plaque of the I:yem Memorial highlights specific aspects of Stó:lō understandings of the canyon that the memorial's creators viewed as non-negotiable in the face of change. Furthermore, contemporary community efforts to regain Stó:lō place names and associated histories can be seen as an effort to reestablish their connections with these places. Notably, Sonny McHalsie's place name research is a means to preserve certain connections with Stó:lō places for future generations. Yet language is dynamic—as changing linguistics and experiences in the canyon inform how these

places are understood. Changing relationships with I:yem are evident in the different names that have been used to describe and refer to this place. In this way I:yem is also Yale Indian Reserve 22, Bell Crossing, archaeological site Djir 2, and has been described in reference to being on the CPR side (right bank) of the river, and its location near particular fishing spots. These English names are indicative of recent historical relationships between the Aboriginal people of the Fraser Canyon and Valley and this location that emphasize both change and continuity.

Relationships with places are never static. They change and are negotiated. They can be mobilized in different ways under different circumstances. While the importance of fishing, ancestors, and maintaining a meaningful connection with the Fraser Canyon was emphasized by the Stó:lō in 1938 and again today, there are perceptible shifts in how people understand I:yem. Over the past seventy years there has been a persistent sense that personal connections with canyon places are at risk of being lost. This has resulted in repeated innovative attempts to regain attachments. Although the creation of the memorial itself was an attempt to reassert Stó:lō connections to the canyon through the ancestors buried there and associated rights to the five mile Native fishery, current interpretations of the memorial place a greater emphasis on the importance of re-establishing personal connections with the Fraser Canyon in general, rather than stating what specific aspects of those relationships are non-negotiable and thereby need to be preserved. The I:yem memorial no longer provides a physical connection for all Stó:lō people and the storied landscape of the Fraser Canyon. This is clear in its use in a recent fishing case where its significance was less that it exists, than that it once did. That day in court, a picture of the memorial and the plaque that once adorned it was needed as evidence of past connections between the Aboriginal people of the Fraser Canyon and Valley and their canyon places.

Meanwhile, people search for ways to forge their own connections with these places that will continue to have meaning for future generations.

This apparent shift in the role of the memorial and its implications for how the Stó:lō and Yale have understood their places also highlights the need to consider the specific contexts in which discussions occurred, the types of sources that have been used, and my own relationships with community members. The noted change in Aboriginal understandings of the Fraser Canyon from 1938 to 2007 may partially be due to the different sources that were used in these case studies, where the former relied upon newspaper sources, government records and existing ethnographic field notes, the latter was primarily based on oral interviews that I conducted. More generally, this demonstrates how sources themselves may promote certain types of analysis, and how, in this instance, they prioritizing some aspects of relationships with place over others. The nature of petitions and letters to the federal government in response to fishery closures in the first half of the twentieth century were political, emphasizing communal experiences and goals. In contrast, my own interviews focused on personal experiences and lost connections with canyon places. Furthermore, affidavits, court transcripts, and political statements emphasized the current conflict between the Yale and Stó:lō. In this regard, the significance of the I:yem memorial in the adversarial context of court differs substantially from a newspaper account regarding Archbishop W. M. Duke's role in the dedication of the monument—regardless of the era.

Inevitably, when comparing understandings of I:yem in 1938 and 2007 it is difficult to differentiate between what might be shifts in attitudes and what might simply be reflections of different source bases. Any source only provides access to some perspectives (often at the expense of others). As scholars, we must be critical of conventions that dictate the type of information that is included and emphasized in our sources. It is less that personal aspects of

Stó:lō relationships with I:yem were included in earlier petitions, than that their references were subtler than current articulations of love for that place. That certain types of sources may steer one towards particular types of interpretations raises broader methodological issues demonstrating the importance of consulting multiple types of sources.

The use of multiple types of sources and the process of conducting a comparative study shed light on my own biases and enabled a more detailed analysis of both case studies. Community members' responses in oral interviews cannot simply be viewed as Stó:lō understandings of their places. Rather, they are reflections of some Stó:lō people's understandings of their places at a particular time as shared with and interpreted by an interviewer. The specific contexts of certain interpretations of place became apparent in the two case studies. Looking at what was more readily apparent in one time period raised questions for the other, and drew my attention to aspects of understandings of place that would have otherwise been overlooked or taken for granted. Most notably, comparing my own reactions to the economic aspects of the fishery today and in 1938 demonstrated the importance of not dichotomizing the political and the personal, as well as issues of being critical and respectful in analysing all sources. Furthermore this comparison raised awareness about my own tendency to sympathize with those informants that I personally met over others, and the related risk of being susceptible to these sympathetic informant's interpretations of their past and ancestors. The importance of self-reflection and comparison, while important in evaluating all types of sources, is necessary in studies based on oral interviews and the relationships that one is able to form with community members. It is through comparison and reflection that it is possible to begin exploring complexities of Stó:lō and Yale understandings of place that would otherwise be overlooked.

There are differing relationships with I:yem, not only between groups, but also within communities, and sometimes with particular individuals. Yet, the various perspectives that have been explored are only glimpses or facets of a complex web of relationships with a place and between those who share it. The aspects that have been explored are primarily the tangible ones. Though I have emphasized the personal relations and connections that some people have to I:yem and the canyon, it is difficult to articulate the complete nature of these aspects of their relationships or the meaning inherent in the words family, God, violence, food, love, loss, life, death, identity, and home, that are used to describe them. People are a part of I:yem. In some ways, attempting to describe these elements of people's relationships with this place lessens the reality. I:yem is a Stó:lō place and a Yale place, but beyond that it is experienced and interpreted by particular individuals and families. Fundamentally understandings of the many relationships between these people and I:yem belong to those with connections there. Nonetheless, attempting to explore aspects of these relationships between the Aboriginal People of the Fraser Canyon and Valley and their places brings us closer to that "unstable intellectual middle ground,"<sup>3</sup> from which understanding will be possible.

It was in response to calls for instability that the preceding meditation on the significance of place has been offered. This exploration of I:yem built upon several bodies of literature, including works specific to the Coast Salish and the Fraser Canyon, place making, memory studies, and a variety of anthropological and historical theorists. Beyond fitting into a rich regional and thematic historiography this thesis makes its own contribution to existing discussions on

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<sup>3</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, "Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact," in *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous European Contact*, ed. by John Sutton Lutz, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 68.

collective affiliation, place making, and debates over issues of authority, while raising some new questions and issues. Sonny McHalsie, Bruce Miller, Keith Thor Carlson, Wayne Suttles and Crisca Bierwert have noted the importance of place to the Coast Salish people, and the role of places in validating social and political status and determining personal and collective identities. However, beyond the knowledge and information that is located in the landscape and accessible to properly trained individuals there is innate meaning in places where some people can be seen to belong. In this way much of the discourse over the canyon fishery has also been limited in that it is primarily about fish or economics rather than the significance of fishing as a means to maintain connections to canyon places. By focusing on relationships and incorporating the theories of Marshall Sahlins, R.G. Collingwood, historical consciousness, and the idea of multiple histories this discussion contributes to current conversations regarding Coast Salish collective identity and opens doors to rethinking the importance of place.

In addition to scholarship relating to the Stó:lō and Coast Salish, this analysis seeks to contribute to a broader body of academic literature on place making, demonstrating how places themselves may be inherently powerful rather than simply social constructs. It is necessary to explore the reciprocal relationships between people and their places, as individuals gain power and authority from belonging to certain places that they in turn use to maintain connections with in the present and for the future. For the Stó:lō it is the relationship with the Fraser Canyon itself that is important. Whereas much of the recent scholarship regarding the impact of colonialism on Aboriginal people has centred on the ways their relationships with the landscape has been altered,<sup>4</sup> this thesis moves beyond how aspects of these relationships have changed to exploring how people

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<sup>4</sup> See for example works by Bruce Miller, Alexandra Harmon, Andrea Laforet, Crisca Bierwert, and Cole Harris.



have made efforts to protect and regain them. Examining such understandings of place is especially significant in the current context of land claims and treaty negotiations—as is recognizing that relationships between the Yale and the Stó:lō, as well as those between these groups and the federal and provincial governments and other Canadians, are influenced by places themselves and the ways they are interpreted and remembered. The Aboriginal people of the Fraser Canyon and Valley have and will continue to set the parameters of what aspects of the canyon can change and what must be preserved, ultimately demonstrating the centrality of their many relationships with this place.

## **Appendix A: Political Affiliations of Aboriginal Groups of the Lower Fraser Watershed, 2007**

### **Independent First Nations:**

Chehalis  
Coquitlam  
Katzie  
Musqueam  
Peters (Squatits)  
Semiahmoo  
Skwah  
Squamish  
Tsawwassen  
Tsilé-waututh  
Union Bar  
Yale

### **First Nations Belonging to Stó:lō Nation:**

Aitchelitz  
Leq'a:mel  
Matsqui  
Popkum  
Shxwhá:y Village  
Skawahlook  
Skowkale  
Squiala  
Sumas  
Tzeachten  
Yakwekwioose

### **First Nations Belonging to Stó:lō Tribal Council:**

Chawathil  
Cheam  
Kwantlen  
Kwaw-kwaw-Apilt  
Scowlitz  
Seabird Island  
Shxw'ow'hamel  
Soowahlie



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